

Levy: No crisis in peace talks

NEW YORK (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Wednesday that President George Bush has assured him the United States will not intervene to end the procedural disputes confining the Middle East peace talks to corridors. Mr. Levy, who met the president Tuesday in Washington, told U.S. Jewish leaders that the talks were not in crisis, even though he said the Palestinians were acting provocatively and he pledged, "Israel will not despair and will not walk out." He said the talks would be resumed in the near future and that there would be no U.S. intervention to break the impasse over procedural issues that have so far dogged the talks. The discussions ended in Washington on Wednesday with an agreement to continue in early January at a site to be chosen. Mr. Levy said he told Mr. Bush that the "Arab side should not delude itself into thinking that the longer it stalls, the better the chances the United States will intercede." Mr. Levy also told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, "Let us be realistic. The Palestinians are behaving provocatively. They want to introduce changes in what has already been agreed."

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'10,000 Soviet Jews may leave Israel'

TEL AVIV (R) — A senior immigration official voiced fears on Wednesday that some 10,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants facing economic hardships in Israel will leave. Uri Gordon, head of immigration in the Jewish Agency which is responsible for bringing Jews to Israel, said 10,789 Soviet newcomers requested passports and travel documents in 1991. "In light of the severe crisis in absorption, there is a danger that the phenomenon of immigrants asking to leave the country will grow," he told Reuters. Mr. Gordon said 7,964 asked for passports and travel documents last year and 70 per cent did not return to Israel. Immigrants have difficulty finding work and affordable housing in Israel, where 10.4 per cent of the workforce is unemployed. Many professionals take low-paying menial jobs. Finance Minister Yitzhak Mordechai forecasts unemployment will rise to 14 per cent within the next two years when hundreds of thousands more immigrants are expected to arrive. The central bureau of statistics said this week only 68,000 of some 350,000 Soviet immigrants since late 1989 had found jobs, leaving 44,000 listed as unemployed and thousands more on language and professional training programmes.

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Abu Tayeh sworn in as envoy to Romania

AMMAN (Petra) — Ambassador Farwan Abu Tayeh was Wednesday sworn in before His Majesty King Hussein on the occasion of his appointment as Jordan's ambassador to Romania. The ceremony was attended by the chief of the Royal Court, the King's advisor, the foreign minister and the King's military secretary.

French nuclear team visits Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — Senior French officials began talks in Islamabad Wednesday expected to centre on resolving a long-standing dispute over the supply of a French nuclear power plant to Pakistan. France cancelled a contract to supply a nuclear reprocessing plant in 1978 amid Western fears that Islamabad was on the brink of acquiring nuclear weapons. The two sides have yet to settle Pakistan's claims for compensation for the \$200 million it has already spent on the plant. Last year French President Francois Mitterrand told Pakistan's then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that France was ready to supply a nuclear power plant.

Turkey to upgrade ties with Israel, PLO

ANKARA (R) — Turkey plans to upgrade its diplomatic relations with Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to embassy level, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Filiz Dincen said Wednesday. "The simultaneous upgrading of the Israeli and Palestinian representations is being studied. The government has a positive outlook to this," Mr. Dincen said. Turkey maintains diplomatic relations at legation level with both Israel and the PLO. It downgraded ambassadorial ties with Israel in 1980 to protest Israel's "annexation" of East Jerusalem. Turkey was one of the first countries to recognise a Palestinian state declared in November 1988.

Karrubi: China, Iran must resist USA

BEIJING (R) — The speaker of Iran's parliament ended an official visit to China on Wednesday with a blast at the United States, accusing it of trying to dominate the world and brazenly interfering in other countries' affairs. Mehdi Karrubi said China and Iran, both wary of President George Bush's plan for a new world order, were united in resisting any U.S. attempts to set the world agenda following the collapse of the Soviet Union. "We are afraid the United States will use the chaos in the Soviet Union to interfere in the situation," he told a news conference after three days of meetings. Karrubi said China and Iran agreed that Third World countries should strengthen economic and political cooperation.

Egypt honours Ghali

CAIRO (R) — Egypt awarded one of its highest honours to Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Ghali on Wednesday to mark his election as the next United Nations secretary-general. President Hosni Mubarak hosted a reception in Dr. Ghali's honour at the presidential palace and presented him with the Nile Scarf. Dr. Ghali, 69, is due to take over from current Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Jan. 1 for a five-year term.

Rebel Kurds kill informer in Turkey

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Separatist Kurds in Turkey kidnapped 17 civilian village guards and killed a former rebel who had given evidence against guerrillas in court, security sources said Wednesday. The rebels shot dead Mehmet Iki, 22, a former member of the outlawed Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) on his way home in southeastern Sirnak town on late Tuesday, they said. He had served a reduced jail term for rebel activities and was released after giving evidence against the PKK. Another group of separatist rebels kidnapped 17 civilian village guards from a road block near Cehitli village in Bitlis province on Wednesday.

Peace talks at impasse, adjourned until January

From George Hawatmeh, Nermeen Murad and Ghadeer Taher in Washington

JORDANIAN, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators ended their second round of bilateral talks at an impasse Wednesday after they failed to reach agreement on a formula to split talks into separate tracks, but the two sides agreed to hold another round of bilateral negotiations, probably in Washington Jan. 7.

The talks in the American capital ended without any agreement after eleven straight sessions of negotiations on the framework of dividing the joint delegation into two separate tracks, but all sides tried not to

portray the failure as a deadlock. Despite the impasse, the Israeli delegation rejected an Arab request to allow the co-sponsors to intervene to help bridge the differences in positions. Under the ground rules for the peace conference, both sides must officially request co-sponsor intervention before it is possible.

The Jordanian and Palestinian sides, however, had requested U.S. intervention indirectly, by briefing State Department officials earlier on the status of the talks. The Arab delegates told the American officials that the

Arab side had done everything in its power to avoid the impasse and proceed towards holding substantive talks.

"I am very, very sorry to tell you that we have not agreed on continuing because the Israelis are putting all the obstacles of having a proper meeting for the talks," the head of the Jordanian delegation, Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, told reporters after the last session of talks, which were held over this and last week.

"According to the letter of invitation... there is a Jordanian-Israeli track and there is a Palestinian-Israeli track with a proper agenda for the Palestinian side, which is the interim self-

government arrangement, and our own distinctive agenda," Dr. Majali said as he was leaving the State Department with the head of the Palestinian team, Haidar Abdul Shafi.

He said the Arab delegates had made "enough compromises" in order to bridge the differences and move into the negotiating rooms.

"We have given enough compromises and I think we went to the... bottom of all the compromises, which we cannot continue doing," Dr. Majali said.

Dr. Majali criticised the Israeli delegation's refusal to take the case to the co-sponsors after failure to reach an accord on the issue of the two tracks.

"We have told them let us go to the co-sponsors and talk to them... I think we had enough," Dr. Majali said. "They (Israelis) refused bluntly. They said we do not even accept the idea of a sponsor."

The head of the Israeli delegation, Elyakim Rubenstein said the co-sponsors — the United States and the Soviet Union — had played a useful role in preparations for the meetings. "Now it is time for the parties to negotiate."

He said the Israeli delegation did not ask the Jordanians to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. "The Jordanians will

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Little movement on Syrian, Lebanese talks with Israel

ISRAELI, Syrian and Lebanese negotiators broke off their talks Wednesday without much progress.

The sides agreed to meet again Jan. 7.

Talks with Syria ended without movement on Syrian demands for the unconditional return of land seized by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war and Israel's insistence that this be preceded by peace and security guarantees.

Six days of meetings over the past two weeks failed to break a deadlock between Israel and

Syria about the Syrian demand for the return of the Golan Heights.

Negotiations between Israel and Lebanon also ended Wednesday.

Syrian delegation leader Muwaffak Allaf said his group had suggested Jan. 7 for the resumption of their talks, but the Israelis, who have sought to space out the three negotiations, want to wait until after Jan. 13.

He said Syria insists on staying

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Negotiators say they tried all compromises to end deadlock

Following are comments to the press by Jordan's chief negotiator Abdul Salam Majali, Palestinian chief negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi, Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi and Israeli delegation head Elyakim Rubenstein after Wednesday's meetings in Washington:

Dr. Majali: I am very, very sorry to tell you that we have not agreed on going on with what we are doing because the Israelis are putting all the obstacles of having a proper meeting for the talks, according to the proper invitation which we had that there is a Jordanian-Israeli track and there is a Palestinian-Israeli track, with a proper agenda for the Palestinians, which is the interim self-government, and our agenda is different.

So we have two different agendas but insisting on meeting in a different category, calling it the joint; in other words, to meet 14 Israeli delegates and seven against from the other side. We agreed to have a joint meeting and this joint meeting should be having equal numbers for the three parties.

We are three parties. It is quite clear in the invitation that we are three parties. There is a party, a Palestinian discussing and negotiating

with Israel on the interim; there is a Jordanian party negotiating with Israel on their agenda. And this is what we have accepted. This is what we came here for.

Unfortunately, this is the 11th session in the last three weeks. Unfortunately, this did not come through. We left a track of opening that if the Israelis have changed their minds and could accept the normal thing of having these two tracks to meet, we are ready. We gave enough compromises and I think we went to the rock bottom of all the compromises which we cannot continue doing.

Q: Was this the last meeting in Washington in this round? Are you going back home tonight?

Dr. Majali: If we do not hear to the contrary, we will be going home. In fact, already the Israelis decided — before that they were going home yesterday, they changed their mind, they want to go home today. So they

set the time before even consulting with us, and we do not accept such a thing to be dictated to us. This should have been discussed thoroughly and we go on with the meetings till we come to the end and then we should break on a mutual.

Unfortunately, they took the decision to leave even before finalising this with us as delegation.

Q: You're leaving with everything up in the air? You haven't agreed when to meet again, where to meet, etcetera?

Haidar Abdul Shafi: No, the important thing, the only thing I want to say is that Israel has been calling for the last 24 years, to sit with the Palestinians on the negotiating table and she was calling and calling and calling for meeting with the Palestinians on the negotiating table. After all this, we came up here. We take all the difficulties to come up here and to respond to this demand and to talk with them and they refuse to sit with us. They refuse except only by a joint delegation with the Jordanians, in spite of the stipulation in the invitation that there is an Israeli-Palestinian

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. and U.N. role in focus in American media

Special from Washington

WEDNESDAY'S U.S. press reports played up President George Bush's call on Arab and Israeli negotiators to overcome their "procedural" dispute and to begin talks on substance. The call was reportedly made during his meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy on Tuesday. The reports also highlighted the Israeli delegation's announcement that it planned to leave Washington this evening, but would consider extending its stay until Thursday. The Philadelphia Inquirer suggested that this announcement amounted to a deadline, and appeared "more an attempt to place pressure on the Palestinians to accept Israel's proposals on procedure." Reports noted the Palestinian letter denouncing Israel's crackdown on the occupied territories and calling on it to stop all settlement activity.

All sides were quoted expressing disappointment and frustration that Tuesday's exchange of Arab and Israeli proposals failed to produce agreement. Head Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi summed up the day, telling reporters it was "a frustrating matter that we are still stuck in this position after four days of discussions." The respective proposals were outlined briefly in the reports.

(Continued on page 5)

Polio said making a comeback to Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — The crippling childhood disease polio, which world health officials have vowed to eradicate, has made a comeback in Iraq since the Gulf war, U.N. experts say.

An official of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said 15 to 20 children a month had contracted polio in the past two or three months across Iraq.

Only a few cases of the disease were reported in 1990 before the Gulf war over Kuwait knocked out water and sanitation systems and halted vaccination programmes which reached 90 per cent of Iraq's children.

"It will be very hard to reach the same coverage for vaccinations," UNICEF's Iraq representative, Ezio Gianni Murzi, told Reuters Tuesday.

He said UNICEF provided



His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday meets with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. Discussed during the meeting were the ongoing Middle East peace process and bilateral relations. The King presented to Mr. Dumas the Jordanian Al Kawakab Medal of the First Order (Petra photo)

Dumas underlines European role in Mideast peace process

AMMAN (I.T.) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas arrived in Amman Wednesday for talks with officials on the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Dumas received a warm welcome by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber on his arrival from Paris at Marka airport. Later, both officials drove to the Royal Palace where His Majesty King Hussein was to receive Mr. Dumas.

Mr. Dumas was expected to discuss the latest development on the Middle East peace drive and a European role in the process.

In an arrival statement, Mr. Dumas said he hoped Arab-Israeli peace talks would make some progress in the future.

He arrived in Amman as Arabs and Israelis began a final day of

Middle East peace talks in Washington, which have stalled over a Palestinian demand for separate negotiations with Israel.

"In the recent weeks we have followed the discussions and we regret that things are moving slowly," Mr. Dumas, speaking through a translator, said at Amman airport.

"But we support the peace process and we hope that the next meeting will begin to make progress."

He said the European Community would play an important role in multilateral peace talks due next month to discuss regional issues such as arms control, Palestinian refugees, water rights and economic cooperation.

During his two-day stay, Mr. Dumas also planned talks with

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

Mr. Dumas had planned to visit Syria on Thursday and Friday but the French Foreign Ministry said that trip was postponed to prepare for a NATO meeting Thursday afternoon in Brussels.

The French Foreign Ministry announced that Mr. Dumas had consulted with Syrian officials before postponing the visit.

The ministry said Mr. Dumas had decided he would attend the NATO meeting Thursday afternoon in Brussels to discuss the rapidly changing events in the Soviet Union.

No new date has been set for the Syrian trip, Foreign Ministry spokesman Maurice Gourdant-Montagne said.

Libya seeks third country for Lockerbie trial

SOFIA (R) — Libya is looking for a third country to stage the trial of two Libyan agents suspected of blowing up a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, a Bulgarian foreign ministry official said on Wednesday.

"Most likely Libya will ask Bulgaria to host the trial," he told Reuters.

The official was speaking after a Libyan envoy arrived in Sofia for talks with Bulgarian authorities on the case.

"The envoy of the Libyan leadership is expected to discuss the possibility of Sofia mediating in the trial against the two Libyan agents," the official added.

Government officials, asked

for comment, would neither confirm nor deny the information.

Bulgaria last month was the first country to formally support a joint U.S. and British statement demanding Libya surrender the two agents, disclose all it knows about the bombing and pay compensation to victims' families.

Some 10,000 Bulgarians, mostly doctors and construction workers, are employed in Libya.

Libya has rejected U.S. and British demands to hand over the two, suspected of planting a bomb on the plane. All 270 people aboard the flight were killed when it exploded over Scotland.

Tripoli has named a judge to conduct a separate inquiry and placed the two agents under

house arrest.

A U.S. official was quoted on Sunday as saying the United States had already rejected efforts by Middle Eastern countries to mediate on behalf of Libya over the case.

Britain Wednesday rejected the possibility that a third country could stage the trial of two Libyan suspects.

The Foreign Office insisted that the trial must take place in Scotland.

A Foreign Office spokeswoman in London said: "Our position remains absolutely the same. We believe that the crime should be tried where the crime was committed."

30 shot in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers opened fire on Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip on Wednesday, wounding 30, Palestinian sources said.

The sources said the incident in the town of Rafiah was the most violent in over a year. They said soldiers opened fire after Palestinians intervened to stop them arresting three masked men who were painting slogans on a wall.

The sources said most of the wounded were shot in the head and chest. They were taken to a local hospital where one was listed in critical condition.

The army said it was checking the incident. In the Jenin area, in the occupied West Bank, soldiers opened fire on a Palestinian as he was driving in his car.

An army spokesman had tried to run a barricade. The spokesman said he was lightly wounded and had been arrested.

Palestinian sources said soldiers ambushed him from a cave, shot him in the head and took him to hospital. They said the driver and his passengers were "wanted" by the army. Shots were fired at an army outpost in Jenin Wednesday morning. No-one was injured.

Israeli army and police chiefs say that they are increasingly worried by the activities of Jewish settlers who have gone on rampages against Palestinians and others who have seized Arab homes.

Commanders know the settlers have powerful allies in the hardline coalition of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Police who tried to halt a takeover of homes in Silwan, a Jerusalem village of 30,000 Palestinians, felt uneasy confronting settlers hailed as heroes by the government.

Then security forces had to cope with vigorous attacks by settlers who accused the army of failing to guard against Palestinian attacks, smashed windows of cars and houses in West Bank Arab towns and villages.

Defence Minister Moshe Arens criticised the attacks but insisted killings of Jews were a bigger problem. Settlers have been enraged by a surge in Palestinians' use of firearms. Unknown assailants in the West Bank have killed three Israelis since October.

"We are taking the necessary steps to bring anyone who breaks the law — Jew or Arab — to the police," Major-General Danny Yatom, the central commander responsible for the occupied West Bank, told reporters this week.

He said disturbances by Jews must not become the army's problem, adding: "It won't help."

The compromise between government and Brotherhood

The following is the fifth and last in a series analysing Jordan's democratisation process with a special emphasis on the experience of former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri and parliamentary vote of confidence secured by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. The fourth and the fifth parts focused on the Muslim Brotherhood.

By Lami K. Andoui
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood withheld its vote of confidence from the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the movement has managed to remain part of the system without abandoning its role as a leading opposition force.

In other words, the movement's opposition to talks with Israel and its insistence on the Islamisation of the system have not driven, at least so far, the Brotherhood to dissent. Experts on the Islamist movement argue that there has always been a limit to the Brotherhood's

opposition and that the movement has always tried to keep its self-perceived status as a political basis for the regime.

This role, or image, which has been reinforced throughout the last three decades, as the movement was instrumental in curbing the influence of the left, appeared to be threatened during the past five months, when Taher Al Masri was prime minister.

Mr. Masri, the first prime minister since 1957 to seek an alliance with the left and pan-Arab nationalists, had deeply alarmed the Brotherhood which put up fierce resistance to his government.

The former prime minister's assessment for including the left, according to information available, was based on three assumptions: — That the role of the left and pan-Arab nationalists had undergone a fundamental change following the collapse of communism allowing a better conciliatory relationship between the regime and these groups.

— That it was time to broaden the basis of the government to include various trends.

— That the government was not obliged to accommodate the Brotherhood's demands to pursue strict Islamic social and educational policies especially that the left and pan-Arab nationalists had changed their attitude towards the regime.

In practice Mr. Masri was acting upon the National Charter, endorsed by all the major political trends in the Kingdom last June, by trying to include "the opposition" in government.

In retrospect critics of Mr. Masri argue that he should not have ignored, and consequently alienated the conservatives and the Islamists.

Supporters of Mr. Masri, counter that he did not make premature leaps but he was trying to effect a gradual change by seeking an indirect participation of the organised leftist parties — which until two years ago were considered anti regime.

Consequently Mr. Masri did not offer the parties direct participation but asked them to nominate "independent" ministers despite their request for direct representation through party members.

However, even some leftists now argue that both the leftists and Mr. Masri should have been more cautious on how to deal with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Analysts believe that there were three factors which increased the tension between Mr. Masri and the Brotherhood: — The actual taking off of the peace process which confirmed the

Ikhwans' claims that Mr. Masri's cabinet was formed to pave the way for negotiations with Israel.

— Mr. Masri's "alliance" with the left alarmed the Islamists.

— The wide perception that Mr. Masri's cabinet represented "liberal" reaction to the Brotherhood attempts, through their ministers in former Prime Minister Mubarak Badran's cabinet, to impose conservative educational policies.

In fact, for many of Mr. Masri's supporters, his designation signalled a campaign to put an end to the Brotherhood's influence in education and to curb their drive to impose social conservatism.

Judging by interviews conducted by the Jordan Times and by pro-Masri articles in the press, some of his supporters, or at least opponents of the Brotherhood, were clearly pressing Mr. Masri to take firm action to undercut the Brotherhood.

Some even welcomed the government's ban of a Brotherhood

anti-peace rally, even though the action was taken mainly to avoid a head on confrontation between the government and the Brotherhood and that curbing the freedom of one movement, regardless of its policies, could jeopardise democracy.

Mr. Masri, according to the same sources, did not favour a crackdown on the Brotherhood. But he was seeking to undercut their influence mainly through including liberals and leftists in his government.

But in practice, and mainly owing to the tension that arose from the controversy over the peace process, several steps were taken during Mr. Masri's term that appeared to confirm the Ikhwans' fear that they were targeted.

The Jordan Arab National Democratic Alliance (JANDA), the broad coalition of leftists, pan-Arab nationalists and liberals that served as Mr. Masri's major power base, failed to publicly criticise the

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Soviet disunion, rebel schism toughen Afghan peace process

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Upheaval in the Soviet Union and new feuding among U.S.-backed rebels in Afghanistan are complicating efforts to find a peaceful end to the country's 15-year-old war.

The bickering between Afghan moderates and radical fundamentalist Muslims is ripping apart a rebel leadership council formed less than a week ago to present a united front against the government of President Najibullah.

The moderates, most of whom favour some sort of negotiations with the Soviet-backed government in Kabul, have led rebel efforts at peace. Eleven guerrilla leaders went to Moscow for talks last month.

Mr. Najibullah has shown a willingness to negotiate, mindful of the imminent end of Soviet Union under an agreement with the United States to cut all aid to the warring parties by Jan. 1.

But radical guerrillas like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami favour a rigid Islamic government in Kabul and rally against peace efforts, pressing for more fighting and less talking.

The fighting has left at least 1.5 million Afghans dead, more than three million maimed or wounded and five million more in exile in Pakistan and Iran.

Complicating matters is the chaos in the former Soviet Union, the main backer of Mr. Najibullah's government.

A joint Afghan-Soviet commission, which some had hoped would be able to mediate between resistance leaders and the Najibullah government, had been scheduled to meet Thursday in Islamabad. It is unclear whether the meeting will take place.

"The events in the former Soviet Union are changing so rapidly that we can say what will happen in seven days. You can only predict 15 minutes ahead," said an official at the Soviet embassy who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The commission is considered

important because even the most moderate guerrilla groups reject direct talks with the Afghan government.

Alexander Rutskoi, Russian Federation vice-president and ex-fighter pilot in Afghanistan, was to head the Soviet delegation.

Mr. Rutskoi told Iran that the Russian Federation, seeking a way out of a severe economic crisis, is keen to boost ties with foreign countries, particularly its neighbours.

Mr. Rutskoi, who arrived in Tehran Tuesday on the first leg of a tour that will also take him to Pakistan and Afghanistan, also voiced willingness to boost cooperation with Islamic countries.

"Russian officials are making efforts to promote ties with world countries and especially the neighbouring ones in order to overcome the deep economic crisis that Russia is faced with at present," Iran's national news agency (IRNA) Wednesday quoted him as saying.

Muslims and other nationalities would live "peacefully together in the Russian Federation," he said.

Mr. Rutskoi said the Russian Federation would honour economic agreements signed between Iran and the Soviet Union.

The accord was advantageous to both sides, he told Tehran Radio on arrival Tuesday night.

Mr. Rutskoi will also hold meetings with leaders of the Afghan Mujahedeen during his tour.

IRNA said Russian President Boris Yeltsin pledged to try to find an Afghan political settlement during a meeting with Afghan Mujahedeen leaders who visited Moscow last month.

While in Tehran, Mr. Rutskoi was to meet President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Finance Minister Mohsen Nourbakhsh and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, IRNA added.

Mr. Rutskoi met with some of the Iranian officials Wednesday and said he expected Tehran to help win release of Russian pris-



Najibullah

oners held by the Mujahedeen.

Tehran Radio emphasised his statement that Russia would honour economic agreements signed by the Soviet Union. The two countries have agreed to build a joint gas pipeline and a railroad, and set up a ferry company on the Caspian Sea.

The radio gave no further details of Mr. Rutskoi's call for Iran to help with gaining release of the Russian soldiers in Afghanistan.

Guerrilla chief blames U.S.

An Afghan rebel leader said in an interview published Wednesday the United States made a gross error by agreeing with the Soviet Union to stop supplying arms to Afghan rebels.

Ahmad Shah Massoud told the French daily Le Figaro an accord under which Moscow will halt all supplies of arms and fuel to the Afghan government by the end of December would only prolong the country's civil war.

"Maintaining aid to the Mujahedeen would have brought about a rapid military decision... in any case, Moscow would have been unable to continue its support for the Kabul regime for very long," he said.

"The Soviets would have in any case been forced to leave Afghanistan... Najib would have been obliged to recognise his defeat and leave. Instead he has bought time," Mr. Massoud said, referring to President Najibullah.

Hamadi family defies Iranian pressure

BEIRUT (R) — The family of two Shiite brothers jailed in Germany for kidnapping, air piracy and murder is resisting Iranian pressure to free the last Western hostages in Lebanon, pro-Iranian political sources said Wednesday.

They said they doubted that a visit by U.N. negotiator Giandomenico Picco to Tehran from Wednesday would focus on German hostages Thomas Kemper and Heinrich Struebig and the two Lebanese jailed in Germany — Mohammad Ali and Abbas Hamadi.

Instead Mr. Picco was expected to concentrate in Tehran and later in Damascus on the whereabouts of Israeli airmen Ron Arad, the only Israeli serviceman missing in Lebanon believed to be alive, diplomatic sources said.

"Regarding the German hostages, the problem is not in Iran, it is here in Beirut," a pro-Iranian source said. "The relatives of the Hamadi brothers are resisting Iranian pressure to free the captives."

"When approached by Iranian and pro-Iranian officials who are trying to talk them into letting the hostages go, the Hamadi family repeatedly say: 'What about our sons?'" he said.

With an unbroken record of freeing Western hostages each time he visits Damascus and Lebanon, Mr. Picco is trying to mediate the release of the Germans, about 220 Lebanese held by Israel and six Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon or their remains.

Sources at the United Nations in New York said Mr. Picco, chief mediator in the hostage crisis this year, was expected to hold talks with Iranian officials in Tehran on Wednesday before heading to Damascus.

They said Mr. Picco would pass on Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's thanks to Iranian leaders for their role in the release of the nine Westerners and 91 Arabs held by Israel freed so far.

Mr. Picco will also promise Iran that he will try to discover the fate of four Iranians seized by a Lebanese militia in 1982. Tehran says they are still alive but militia leaders say they were killed.

He said New Delhi should consider having normal relations with Israel on the "same principles" as those applied to India's ties with neighbouring Pakistan.

A senior Foreign Ministry official said in August that India was close to establishing diplomatic ties with Israel.

"Our relation (with Israel) have improved considerably. We are evidently on the right course. It follows naturally, that formal ties look imminent — say, any time from now to within a year," the official said.

Our countries have established flourishing trade ties and, recently, Israeli tourists were given permission to come freely to India," said the official, who requested anonymity.

He added, however, that "diplomatic ties with Israel will not be at the expense of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)," whose representative office in New Delhi was upgraded to an embassy only recently.

Mr. Seth said India's U.N. vote on Monday was "just another step" towards establishing normal relations with Israel.

Bush says U.N. more effective with repeal of Zionism resolution

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush said Tuesday the United Nations will become a more effective organisation now that it has repealed its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism.

The U.N. General Assembly revoked the resolution on Monday by a 111 to 25 vote with 13 abstentions — following intensive lobbying efforts by the United States.

"It was an action that, I think, has made the United Nations much more effective," Mr. Bush told reporters while posing for pictures in the Oval Office with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

"It is long overdue," Mr. Bush said of the repeal. "That resolution shouldn't have been passed in the first place."

"I think we all herald the repeal of it, and I know it was a great day for Israel as well as for the United States and many, many other countries," Mr. Bush said.

The State Department said U.S. bilateral relations with countries which voted against the resolution could be affected by their negative votes.

"We're disappointed that all the U.N. members did not vote to erase this blot on the U.N.'s record," said spokesman Richard Boucher.

"Clearly it was something that... will be looked at in the context of our overall bilateral relationships, or it will be a factor in how we look at the overall bilateral relationships," he said.

The 25 negative votes were mainly cast by Arab and Islamic countries including all three Arab states now in peace talks with Israel — Jordan, Syria and Lebanon — and key U.S. allies like Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

Mr. Levy told reporters after his meeting with Mr. Bush that "what we saw yesterday at the United Nations, and the openness and friendship of the president today was a signal for all to watch of the alliance between the United States and Israel."

"This was a great moral victory," which we have won together," Mr. Levy said. "It was a moment when, with our very own eyes, we saw that a lie cannot live on eternally. Ultimately, light shall drive out darkness."

Mr. Bush, in a speech to the General Assembly in September, called for the repeal and said that "to equate Zionism with the in-

tolerable sin of racism is to twist history and forget the terrible plight of Jews in World War II and, indeed, throughout history."

Zionism was the guiding philosophy behind the Jewish movement that led to the creation of Israel in 1948.

The U.S.-led drive for the repeal has, in part, been tied to American efforts to reach Middle East peace, although Arab diplomats opposed to the repeal argued that the resolution was justified by Israel's policies and that repeal would adversely affect the current Mideast peace efforts.

Mr. Bush's diplomatic efforts on behalf of the U.S. reversal was reflected in the fact that sponsors of the repeal included the Soviet Union, which played a key role in rallying support for a 1975 resolution.

Mexico, which voted for the original resolution 16 years ago, and Japan, which abstained at the time, also sponsored the repeal.

PLO: Israel still racist

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said Tuesday that the U.N. reflected U.S. power, not international will.

"The whole knows through Israel's terrorist acts that it is a racist and fascist regime," said Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's Political Department.

He said the Jewish state "perpetuates its occupation of the Arab and Palestinian lands, persecutes the native population and commits mass massacres, builds Nazi concentration camps, exercises various kinds of torture and expands its settlements in the Arab lands with continuous support from the United States."

"The abrogation of the resolution that considered Zionism a form of racism at the U.S. reflected a lopsided image of the international organisation, and proved U.S. hegemony on the U.N., exactly as happened during the Gulf war when the international legality was used as a tool to serve the U.S. and its allies," Mr. Kaddoumi said.

He said "some European countries" shared the blame with the United States. This group of nations, while preaching for peace, continued racial segregation and economic and political pressure. "In order to keep the Third World under its control and enslave and exploit its resources," Mr. Kaddoumi said.

Kuwaitis protest detention of outspoken Bahraini professor

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait University academics and graduates protested on Tuesday against the arrest of a Bahraini theology professor on his return to Bahrain from Kuwait, saying it was a clear violation of his human rights.

Sheikh Abdul Latif Al Mahmoud, a fundamentalist Sunni Muslim cleric who is associate professor of Islamic studies at Bahrain University, was still in custody after being detained by police on Saturday after making comments in Kuwait critical of the Gulf states' rulers, his nephew Khaled Mahmoud said in Bahrain.

Prof. Mahmoud told a seminar on the future of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that the six-nation alliance could not progress while the Gulf states' systems of government remained unchanged.

"What the Bahraini government has done... is considered a clear violation of his rights as a citizen and a person expressing his views and thoughts," a joint statement issued by Kuwait University's teaching staff and graduates societies.

They have a combined membership of more than 12,000 people.

"We call for the release of Dr. Abdul Latif as quickly as possible so that he can return to his family and work... we hope officials will understand the danger of this stage which the Gulf Arab states are passing through," the statement added, referring to Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

Official sources in Bahrain have confirmed that Prof. Mahmoud, a 43-year-old father of six, was being held for questioning. They said a decision would be made soon on whether to press charges or set him free.

In the Kuwait seminar on Dec. 7, Prof. Mahmoud said ruling families in the Gulf were given undeserved privileges and were above the law. The wealth of the

country belonged to the people not the ruler to use it as he pleased, he said.

He wondered how there could be any progress if Gulf governments continued to stifle speech and impose censorship.

"What Dr. Abdul Latif... expressed are ideas different from him by his scientific honesty and love for his country and Gulf Cooperation Council states, Arab and Islamic nations," the statement from the academics and graduates said.

Prof. Mahmoud's brother Ahmad said cables of protest had been sent to Bahrain's emir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Crown Prince Sheikh Hamed Bin Isa Al Khalifa and Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Diplomats have said Prof. Mahmoud has long had a history of criticising the Bahrain government.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat begins tour of Asian countries

TUNIS (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat left Wednesday on an Asian tour of China, North Korea and possibly Cambodia to urge their leaders to take an active role in the Mideast peace process. Sources at the PLO headquarters here did not release details of Mr. Arafat's itinerary. The trip comes as Palestinian negotiators in Washington are wrangling with their Israeli counterparts over how to proceed with the historic peace talks that began Oct. 30 in Madrid.

Sudan to issue green passports

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan, which is enthusiastically promoting Islam, is to issue its citizens with green passports in future. Police Lieutenant-Colonel Jalal Mohammad Ibrahim, quoted by the Sudanese armed forces daily, announced the move but did not say precisely when the first new passports would be issued. The newspaper, Al Guwat Al Musallahah, said the current passports — blue for ordinary citizens and red and green for diplomats — would be replaced as they expired. The new passports will have 64 pages. They will be valid for five years for ordinary citizens and six years for students studying abroad. Sudan's military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir has promoted the spread of Islamic observance throughout the country since seizing power in 1989.

U.N.: Guards will be withdrawn from Iraq

GENEVA (AP) — United Nations guards stationed in northern Iraq to help displaced civilians may have to leave early next month because of lack of funds, the U.N. said Tuesday. A statement said that despite continuing tension in Kurdish areas, the number of guards would be cut from 500 to 357 later this week as a result of the cash crisis. It said Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the European Commission had not handed over promised donations. This had led to a shortfall of \$8.4 million from the required budget of \$44.4 million. "Unless urgent funding requirements are met immediately, all remaining guards will be repatriated by early January," the statement said. The lightly-armed guards are deployed in Iraq under an agreement reached between U.N. special envoy Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and Iraqi authorities. Their main role is to protect U.N. property and aid convoys and provide reassurance to Iraqis displaced by the internal upheavals.

Lawyers sum up at Nosair trial

NEW YORK (R) — Prosecutors and defence lawyers in the case against El Sayyid Nosair, accused of killing Israeli extremist Meir Kahane, completed summations Tuesday and the jury is expected to begin deliberating on Wednesday. Mr. Nosair's attorneys urged the jury to acquit him because there was not a single witness who saw him shoot Kahane in a crowded room. But prosecutors argued that the evidence against the Egyptian-born Nosair was overwhelming and included his fleeing the crime scene with a gun in his hand, shooting a man at the door and minutes later getting into a shootout with a post office policeman. As Mr. Nosair sat in the New York courtroom, prosecutor William Greenbaum said Mr. Nosair shot Kahane on Nov. 5, 1990, in a meeting room of the New York hotel. "Tell him by your verdict 'not herre Nosair, not here,'" Mr. Greenbaum told the jury. Then he held up the alleged murder weapon and said, "it took one life, wounded two others and scared an awful lot of people." Defence lawyer Michael Warren said, "Mr. Nosair is totally innocent of these unfounded charges. I ask you to do what is moral, what is fair, what is right under these circumstances and I ask you to come back with a verdict of not guilty." Mr. Warren also reminded jurors that "there has been no evidence whatsoever that anyone saw El Sayyid Nosair shoot Meir Kahane." Mr. Nosair has admitted he was in the hotel when Kahane was there but that, after the shooting, he fled in flight.

Islamic fundamentalist leader jailed in Tunis

TUNIS (AP) — A court has sentenced a leader of a fundamentalist Muslim group to five years in prison for being a member of a banned organisation, court sources said Tuesday. Nabruk Zeren, 58, also was convicted of defaming the government in speeches made during Friday prayers at mosques in the capital. The court ordered four of the five years of the sentence suspended. Since 1985, Tunisia has fought against the rise of Muslim fundamentalist groups that say they are trying to overthrow the government. Leaders of the fundamentalist groups have demanded recognition by the government. More than 500 fundamentalist sympathisers are currently awaiting trial before a military tribunal in Tunis on charges of attempting the violent overthrow of the government. Tunisian law prohibits the creation of political parties based on race, religion, gender or language.

Japanese admit illegal sales to Iran

TOKYO (AP) — Top executives of a leading aviation parts maker admitted in court Wednesday that their company illegally exported parts for U.S.-made sidewinder missiles to Iran, a court official said. Yukio Kaito, then president of Japan Aviation Electronics Industry Ltd. (JAEI), and three other executives acknowledged the charges during the first session of their trial Wednesday at the Tokyo district court, said the court official. According to the charges, JAEI exported 1,357 missile stabilizers, together valued at 35 million yen (\$269,000), to Iran via Singapore between Oct. 13, 1988, and April 4, 1989, without government approval. Under Japanese law, any exports of weapons or weapon parts must be approved by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. The four face a maximum five years in jail and a fine of up to 2 million yen (\$15,000), or five times the value of the transactions, whichever is higher. The government also can order a three-year ban on exports by the company. The company has been a major supplier of aviation equipment to Japan's air Self-Defence Forces and is majority-owned by electronics giant NEC Corp. JAEI also has been charged in the United States with selling 300 U.S.-designed aircraft gyroscopes and navigation equipment from 1984-1987 to the Hong Kong and Singapore subsidiaries of an American company, Aero Systems Inc., knowing they would be reshipped to Iran. The Japanese government imposed an 18-month export ban on the company in October. The court official said the next hearing will be held on Jan. 22.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Lola et les Sardines
18:30 Meguy
19:00 News in French
19:15 Cirque
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Simpsons
21:00 NBA Basketball
21:30 News in English
22:00 Feature film: "Mariko"

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:16 (Sunrise) Duha
11:26 Dhuha
14:12 'Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedeh Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasants Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Assessan Orthodox Church Tel. 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assessan International Church Tel. 827981, 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824 and 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy and windy with be southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min. max. temp.

Amman 1 / 12
Aqaba 6 / 19
Deserts 1 / 12
Jordan Valley 8 / 18

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 11, Aqaba 18. Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hussein Haddad 731267
Dr. Fikher Bubeisi 625778
Dr. Husein Mansour 743644
Dr. Adnan Zaghoul 898140
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Assena pharmacy 637055
Naimah pharmacy 626712
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yaouph pharmacy 649493
Shamsani pharmacy 637660

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Fire Brigade 821228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630521
Hotel Complaints 608800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS

Electric Power 636381
Company 08-53200
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/22
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642281/6
Al-Khali Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Pakirine, Stansand 661174
Shamsani Hospital 661131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaber Hospital 662271/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Ishtiaq, Al-Mahajreen 771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 771111/25
Army, Marfa 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 622400/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:45 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF)
16:00 Tripoli (LN)
18:50 Cairo (MS)
21:35 Damascus, Istanbul (PK)

MARKET PRICES

Uppe/lower price in fils per kg

Apple 600 / 500
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Mukammur) 550 / 500
Beans 850 / 650
Cabbage 160 / 120
Cauliflower 220 / 170
Cucumbers (large) 180 / 120
Cucumbers (small) 360 / 220
Eggplant 280 / 220
Garlic 800 / 700
Grape 500 / 800
Guava 500 / 400
Lemon 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 160 / 120
Marrow (small) 350 / 300
Onion (dry) 650 / 570
Onion (wet) 170 / 120
Pepper (hot) 320 / 260
Pepper (sweet) 450 / 400
Potato 300 / 250
Sage 600 / 500
Spinach 220 / 160
Sweet melon 170 / 120
Tomatoes 420 / 360
Watermelon 160 / 120

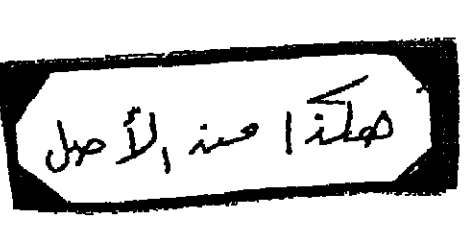
Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
18:05 Cairo (MS)
14:30 Tripoli (LN)
20:15 Larnaca (CY)
20:15 Amsterdam (AT)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:05 Rome (RJ)
11:30 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:00 Paris (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:30 Larnaca (RJ)
19:45 Cairo (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
21:30 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)





NG RECEIVES AMBASSADORS — Five new ambassadors to Jordan Wednesday presented their credentials to His Majesty King Hussein at the Raghadan Palace. There were (clockwise) Mohammed Shalabi Khouri, ambassador of Algeria, Ahmet Ali Irmak, ambassador of Turkey, Adam Othman, ambassador of Malaysia, Dr. Joseph Veling, ambassador of the Netherlands, and Arto Karitun of Finland. The Palace Guard of honor greeted King Hussein upon his arrival for the separate ceremonies and played the national anthems of the five ambassadors' countries. Present at the presentation ceremony were Chief of the Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh, the King's advisor Khaled al-Khazari, Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and the King's military secretary General Taha Ben Mohammad (Petra photos).



King honours athletes, urges them to set proper example

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday honoured prominent athletes and women at a ceremony held at Raghadan Palace. In a brief address, he voiced his appreciation of the athletes' efforts. King Hussein also expressed his hope that prominent athletes will set a good example for the new generation of athletes and women.

Most of those honoured by the King were His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, who is decorated for his distinguished performance on the national polo team, and Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, one of the leading equestrian athletes in the world.

In his part, Prince Hassan said his award to Mohammad al-Najjar in recognition of his role in promoting the performance of the national polo and equestrian teams.

Chinese coach Chen was presented with an award for his distinguished role in training Jordanians in the Tae Kwon Do. A total of 25 people were honoured for their distinguished performances. These included members of teams who excelled in Arab, regional and international championships held in the 1990-1991 sports season.

The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chief of Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh, King Hussein's advisor Khaled al-Khazari, Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid and the King's military secretary General Taha Ben Mohammad.

At the outset of the ceremony, Minister of Youth Saleh Irshaidat delivered an address voicing the

Jordanian family's pride in the honouring of Jordanian athletes.

The Ministry of Youth, he said, was pursuing all efforts in coordination with all concerned institutions to work out a national plan designed to promote sports and youth activities in the Kingdom.

Later, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein stood in for King Hussein at a ceremony held at the Sports City to honour players, coaches, umpires and distinguished members of teams excelling in their performance in regional and international games.

The Minister of Youth delivered another speech at the ceremony voicing the athletes' deep appreciation of the King's continued support for their activities.

Symposium issues call for laws to help women

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a three-day symposium on Arab women in employment and development Wednesday called on Arab governments to enact specific laws and regulations that can guarantee women's contributions to various types of work in the course of socio-economic development.

The recommendations, contained in a final statement following the closing session, stressed the subject of vocational training for women. They called on concerned institutions and schools to diversify the areas of vocational training so that women can be incorporated in all spheres of employment.

The final statement also included a call for Arab states to work in concert towards an integrated Arab labour market benefiting from male and female workers alike.

The participants demanded a mechanism would that help incorporate more women in the labour market and in development programmes.

They stressed the need for offering women equal opportunities with men and allowing women to attain advanced positions including the status of decision-makers in the private and public sectors.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma chaired the final session and made a brief address, referring to the symposium as another step towards giving momentum to the status of women in the Arab World.

The Princess voiced appreciation to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for helping to organise the symposium and ensuring its success.

CAEU call to help Iraqi people falls short of lifting sanctions, official says

By Serene Halasa
Independent to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Council of the Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) failed to call for an end to the economic boycott against Iraq by putting an immediate end to the "suffering" of the people caused by the U.N. embargo.

However, the council's call urged an end to the embargo itself, the council said in a statement.

General Hassan Ibrahim said in an article that appeared in the Arabic newspaper "Al-Naba" Tuesday, the only Arab paper to carry the resolution. Mr. Ibrahim said the call was meant to help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

"We did not call for lifting the embargo against Iraq, we simply called for the easing of the suffering of the Iraqi people," Mr. Ibrahim said in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times.

The council resolution, dated December 15, urged Arab countries to

"take necessary steps to release frozen Iraqi assets" so that Iraq could use it to buy much needed food, medicine and other basic requirements for its people.

It also appealed to the international community to put an end to the economic boycott against Iraq, especially those pertaining to humanitarian needs such as food, medicine and other necessities. The decision also called on Arab countries to "deal commercially with Iraq in every aspect that would enhance the easing of suffering of the Iraqi people."

Mr. Ibrahim insisted that the decision did not call directly for the lifting of sanctions and indicated that the council's call did not include in any of its clauses the word "sanctions."

"We took special care in wording the decision," Mr. Ibrahim said. "We deliberated for almost three days to come up with the decision, making sure that the word 'sanctions' is not mentioned."

Mr. Ibrahim said that the reason the word "sanctions" was omitted in the council's decision was because the issue was "a sensitive one."

The council includes Syria and Egypt, which took part in the U.S.-led campaign to eject Iraq from Kuwait. In addition, Jordan and nine other countries make up the CAEU.

"If you carefully read the drafted decision you would see that the word 'sanctions' is absent and instead the words 'easing the suffering of the Iraqi people' are specifically mentioned," Mr. Ibrahim said.

On Tuesday, Iraq issued a statement saying 80,000 of its children have died because of shortages in food and medicine caused by the U.N. sanctions, in effect since Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The United States and its Western allies have said that the embargo will not be lifted while President Saddam Hussein remains in power in Iraq.

Lack of resources continues to hamper efforts to meet country's food needs, official says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Agriculture Minister Fayez Khasawneh said in an address to a one-day seminar on marketing fruits and vegetables that the Kingdom's resources are insufficient to boost production in order to meet the country's needs.

Despite this, Jordan was able in the 1970s to achieve good progress towards employing modern agricultural technology for boosting production, the minister said at the opening of the symposium, held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Thanks to efforts on the part of the public and private sectors, the country was able to increase its agricultural production, but these were not sufficient to meet its needs, which are always on the increase, the minister noted.

The minister urged all concerned to use the available resources to increase production, noting that marketing plays a role in promoting production and helps the decision-makers to define their future policies and programmes.

By studying the needs of local and foreign markets,

decision-makers can help chart successful marketing policies for the country, the minister said.

Jordan exported 527,000 tonnes of fruits and vegetables to Arab and foreign countries in 1989, estimated at JD104 million in value, according to Dr. Salem Al Lawzi, director general of the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO).

Reviewing the various obstacles and problems impeding production, Dr. Lawzi noted that the AMO had exerted major efforts in promoting the

sale of Jordanian agricultural products to Europe as well as other Arab states.

In 1987, exports to Europe were 340 tonnes, rising to 3,400 tonnes in 1990 and 6,000 tonnes this year, according to Dr. Lawzi.

He said that the time has come for defining an effective policy that can help the AMO to achieve further progress.

Two working papers on marketing of agricultural products were reviewed by the participants, who included exporters, officials and agricultural engineers.

Iraqi children find comfort and help from German people

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four children who were taken from Iraq to be treated in Germany left for home Tuesday thanks to the German International Progress Organisation (IPO), which has so far transported 32 children to Germany from Iraq for treatment.

Dr. Margaret Fakhouri, an official with the IPO who also worked at the Saddam Children's Teaching Hospital in Iraq until 1982, said that the four children were taken to Germany on July 30.

"Two of the children needed artificial limbs and also required treatment to get rid of the bone infection that had developed," she said.

The oldest, a 15-year-old boy, could not move his fingers because of damage from a bomb explosion. The other boy, she said, developed hemiparalysis after a car accident.

"This boy needs further therapeutic treatment," Dr. Fakhouri said. "He may stay in Jordan (for the treatment) and we are planning to bring his mother here."

The children's ages range from six to 15 years. Among them is a Palestinian child.

IPO is part of a sub-committee that makes up the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq, which was founded in May 1991. Other organisations which are part of the committee include the Schiller Institute and the Patriarchate of the Chaldean Church of Babylon.

At a press conference in Bonn, Germany, on May 15, members of the committee presented a plan of action which defined its commitment to intervene in Iraq on three levels: Immediate relief and



Iraqi children, suffering from the effects of the Gulf war and the ongoing U.N. embargo of their country, are getting help and treatment from German hospitals and organisations.

medical care for children, equipment to reactivate hospital facilities and a longer term infrastructure project for the entire region as the basis for enduring peace, according to the committee's brochure.

Accompanying the four children are Dr. Fakhouri and her husband, journalist Kamal Fakhouri. They take with them four tonnes of selected medical supplies such as insulin, needles, special pipes for a photo therapy lamp and other essential items that are not available in Iraq.

"When we were in Iraq in March," Mr. Fakhouri said, "we conducted a series of interviews and took video footage. We noticed what was needed most and we brought them."

So far, the Fakhouris have sent 42 tonnes of food and

medical supplies to Iraq.

According to Dr. Fakhouri, the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the Red Crescent Society send them files of names and historical information on the children. "We study the cases together with other doctors and then go back to Germany and see which ones are accepted," Dr. Fakhouri said.

According to Mr. Fakhouri, there are an increasing number of heart diseases among children. Of 30 names that were obtained, 20 children had some form of heart disease. "But, unfortunately," he added, "there are no places in Germany for heart patients. We are trying to take them to another country."

If the U.N. trade embargo is lifted, then the Fakhouris will think of reducing their role. "Iraq may not need help

then," Mr. Fakhouri said, "because they have modern facilities and about 90 per cent of their doctors have studied abroad. What they need now is availability."

Still, he pointed out, aside from helping the children, it is important to show the German people that the Gulf war was not antisemitic. "These children are living evidence," Mr. Fakhouri told the Jordan Times.

"We have given about 20 lectures in hospitals, universities and schools showing the children" to the German public, Mr. Fakhouri said. "We showed two of the children who had lost their hands because they picked up a toy bomb. We had wide coverage from the local (German) and other European media."

Ministers to attend Parliament session, answer questions

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament will hold a meeting Sunday afternoon in the presence of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and cabinet members to discuss a host of amendments to laws and to hear replies by ministers on questions put forth by deputies.

It will be the first session for Parliament following Monday's session, during which members voted confidence in the new government and its policy statement and programmes.

According to a Parliament statement Wednesday, the session will hear replies to questions put to the minister of public works and housing about agricultural roads in the eastern regions, a reply from the minister of finance about the lands along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea and reply from the minister of transport and telecommunications about

free air tickets given by Royal Jordanian (RJ) to people not working for the national airline.

A report from the Audit Bureau will be read out and several matters related to amendments to laws will be reviewed during the session, the statement added.

Parliament normally convenes Wednesday mornings and Sunday evenings, but this week's Wednesday meeting was postponed until Sunday. No reason was given for the postponement.

In last Monday's session, the government received 46 votes in favour and 27 against. The rest of deputies either abstained or were not present during vote of confidence session.

Announcement From The WATER AUTHORITY OF JORDAN Invitation For Bids (IFB) No. 51/91/SP, 52/91/W

- The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received a loan from Kreditanstalt Fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW) in Deutschmarks towards the water sector programme and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract(s) for which this IFB has been issued.
- The Water Authority now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following:-

No. of Tender	Supply of	Non-refundable Fee in JD	Performance Security in JD
1) 51/91/SP	Submersible Pumps & Spare Parts	50.-	5,500.-
2) 52/91/W	Welding Machines	50.-	3,000.-

- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect the bidding documents at, the office of the Secretary General, Tenders Division, Water Authority, P.O. Box 2412, Amman, Jordan, tel. 06-680100, Tlx. 22439 WAJ JO, FAX 679143.
- A complete set of the tender documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as mentioned in Item 2 above.
- All bids must be accompanied by a security as mentioned in Item 2 above and must be delivered to the office not later than 1200 hours, Jordan local time, on Tuesday 18/2/1992.

Eng. Mutazz Belbeisi
Secretary General
Water Authority



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- * BAMBOO planters
- * BURR plates & trays
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- * Shells novelties

BAMBOO HOUSE/WADI SAQRA/OPPOSITE PETRA BANK

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation announces

that entries are now being accepted for the March 7, 1992, Music Theory exams of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music as from December 12, 1991.

Closing date: December 23, 1991.

Registration will take place at the Conservatory, Jabal Amman, Atiyat Building, telephone: (687620-687621), daily from 09:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fridays are excluded.

denies reports

AMMAN (Petra) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) denied today news circulated by the newspapers that Jordanian banks were instructed not to remit any cash to Iraq and that the Jordanian banks had done so. The CBJ issued a statement to the Jordan Agency, Petra, that such news were fabricated and untrue. The statement said the CBJ has facilitated bank dealings between Jordanian banks, including any bank claims on any bank party.

Jordan Times

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Jordan Times advertising department.

Dangerous precedent

THERE is no doubt that the repeal of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3379 of 1975, which equated Zionism with racism, is a major setback and an ominous precedent on more than one count. On the United Nations level, there is hardly a similar precedent when the international organisation had reversed itself in so open and naked a manner. What is alarming and astonishing in this regard is that the majority of the 75 countries which had originally supported the resolution in 1975 have in effect repudiated themselves without the benefit of any new factor or rationale. Had there been positive developments on the application of the Zionist ideology and practice ever since that time, one would have condoned such a change of heart. As is, the countries which decided to make a complete U-turn on such a fundamental issue that touches the heart of civil and political rights, is tantamount to a betrayal of fair play and honest judgement. Moreover, such unjustified overruling of a previously debated decision makes a mockery of the way the entire U.N. system is conducting its affairs and decision-making process.

And the fact that some Arab states have also chosen to change their colours on an issue that once unified the Arab World casts a shadow of serious doubt on the whole Arab Order. One can even feel a sense of vindictiveness in Tuesday's voting pattern of some of the Arab states when they apparently decided to vent off their anger at the Palestinian people and their cause by refraining from supporting a resolution with which they were so organically linked less than two decades ago. In this sense, such Arab governments have betrayed themselves first before forsaking their fellow Arab peoples, not to mention the betrayal of the principles involved in the 1975 resolution.

But does the rescinding of the 1975 resolution associating Zionism with racism change things in any fundamental way? As long as Israel aspires for an exclusive Jewish state and as long as it practices and applies apartheid-like legislation against non-Jews and continues to bestow favours on Jews while discriminating against non-Jews, notably Arabs, that country will continue to be racist and no resolution can change that fact. If Israel seriously seeks to rid itself of the racist tag, it only has to change its laws, especially the one that grants automatic citizenship to Jews anywhere in the world and begin the long process of according Jews and non-Jews equal rights, treatment and protection in the land of Palestine. Otherwise, Zionism will continue to be regarded as a form of racism in spite of all manipulative efforts to whitewash it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE U.N. General Assembly rescinded its own resolution equating Zionism with racism under pressure from Washington and through bribery and coercion by the enemies of freedom said Al Rai Arabic daily Wednesday. The paper said that the cancellation of the 1975 resolution about Zionism does not mean that Zionism is good since its actions and practices speak otherwise. Such cancellation can by no means remove the stigma of inhuman behaviour from the Zionist movement which is manifested in the continued occupation of Arab lands, the paper said. Washington, and the rest of the Western capitals are in the habit of describing any move by the Arabs and Muslims to achieve freedom as an act of terrorism, but these capitals have been condoning Israel's atrocities and allowing Zionism to impose occupation, repression and terrorism on the Arab areas, the paper added. The Arabs and Muslims are waging a movement of liberation against the atrocities of the West and against occupation and aggression and the cancellation of the 1975 resolution can by no means brighten the image of world Zionism which is the worst form of racism in word and deed, the paper continued. By rescinding the 1975 resolution the Western countries tried to appease Israel and show the world that they condone its atrocities and repression against the Palestinian people at a time when these Western nations maintain their hatred against the Israelis and the other Arab nations and starve the Iraqi people in a clear show of disregard to human rights and human feelings, the paper said. The paper said Washington seems to be concerned only with implementing U.N. resolutions which cause harm to the Arabs and driving other nations to support Israel's occupation and atrocities against the Arab Nation.

AL EUSTOUR daily described the rescinding of the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution as a new American gift to Israel. The new resolution came as a result of Washington exercising its monopoly, as a sole superpower, its influence and its coercion against the nations of the world, the paper said. We were not surprised to see Washington taking such a move, especially in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Gulf war and other developments in favour of the United States, said the paper. Following these serious world events, it has become clear that the U.N. Security Council and the General Assembly will be under the absolute influence of the United States, and developments worldwide would be moved and stirred by orders from Washington, the paper said. As the United Nations take resolutions favourable to Washington and its Israeli strategic ally, it passes unjust resolutions aimed at maintaining the embargo on the innocent Iraqi people and refrains from passing resolutions for ending Israel's occupation of Arab lands, the paper added.

Palestinian negotiating team personifies political evolution of group's struggle

By Nora Bonstany

The following article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

THEY have come to Washington with their portable computers, business suits and soft British accents or French intonations from countries that are not their own.

This new team of Palestinian peacemakers — an array of academics, physicians, mayors and legal experts — is steeling itself for a drawn-out negotiating struggle with Israel. Whether speaking in hushed tones in the carpeted lounges of the Grand Hotel or rushing in and out of strategy meetings, they are the latest face of their people's drive for control over their lives.

While their chances for success remain uncertain as they continue to wrangle with Israelis over procedural details surrounding peace talks here, they personify the political evolution of their movement from hijackings and sieges to popular revolt to negotiations after more than four decades.

"They are not only technicians. They have been through all the faces and all the stages of the movement," said Palestinian historian Elias Satter, editor of the Paris-based La Revue D'Etudes Palestiniennes.

The unshaven face of Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat has been replaced as representative visage of the Palestinians by the composed gaze of Hanan Ashrawi, the English literature professor who is serving as spokeswoman at the talks. The images of a kaffiyeh-covered freedom fighter hoisting a gun or hurling a hand grenade, or photos of scrawny young militants posing in an orange grove in South Lebanon before an infiltration attempt into northern Israel, have faded, at least for the time being.

Each Palestinian representative at the talks has credentials as a militant. Most of the delegates have been deported or imprisoned by Israeli military authorities for taking part in protest activities. The majority of delegates and their backup team have talked to Israelis before, some in informal debates and many across interrogation tables in Israeli jails.

Why did these same people not have a prominent voice before? The difference now, they say, stems from the Palestinian intifada, or uprising, that began in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip four years ago.

"We kind of needed the sacrifice of the intifada. Before, it was the PLO paying the price with its

blood elsewhere. It is only when the blood was shed in the occupied territories that we earned the right to speak," explained Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian writer and film producer.

"In Palestinian politics, the highest oath you can swear by is the blood of the martyrs. This gave the people in the occupied territories a kind of power it never had," he continued. "We did not have the self-confidence to join the Camp David process (between Israel and Egypt) in 1979. We could not have done it then without feeling we were traitors."

Fourteen delegates, supported by a "guidance committee" and other advisers, have been working together formulating policy and negotiating tactics for the peace process, which began with a multilateral conference in Madrid in October.

They have become a kind of traveling think tank, assembled from universities in the occupied territories as well as from Paris, London and the United States. They have little negotiating experience.

"We have no foreign ministry, no embassy, we have never worked together so intensely and we come from a dozen places. We have a wheel — the PLO — but we are not allowed to use it," said

Rashid Khalidi, a graduate of Oxford University and director of the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. "We have been improvising. We are reinventing the wheel in motion, and it is very difficult."

"They are not taking orders from Tunis (where the PLO is headquartered). There are consultations. They key to their success is to convince Tunis to take a back seat," said Mr. Kuttab.

While Israeli and Palestinian negotiators remain at an impasse, Israeli observers have been impressed with the realism and pragmatism of the new Palestinian team as evidenced by their businesslike, ready-to-talk approach — a sharp contrast with the rejectionist posturing of veteran PLO representatives.

"What we are witnessing here in Washington is that those in the negotiating team gain power in the decision-making process as it goes along," said Ehud Yaari, an Israeli author and journalist. "The people from the territories, they know the Israelis; the way they can converse with us is completely different."

The Palestinian negotiators seem to have no illusion about the limits on their freedom to manoeuvre. As arrests and Israeli-ordered demolition of

houses continue in the occupied territories, delegates have expressed fears that support the talks will diminish among Palestinians.

"We are appetizers, the Palestinian negotiating team. We are disadvantaged in many ways," delegate Sa'eb Erekat, a university professor, in irritation one evening. "Our people back home have something to show us — bulldozers building settlements or blown-up homes. We have nothing to show them."

Many of the Palestinian delegates are not politicians, but professionals, people of modest means familiar with the reality of life under occupation.

The chief Palestinian delegate, Haider Abdul Shafi, 72, the president of the Red Crescent Society in Gaza, is a physician. He is considered close to the old Palestinian Communist Party, the only Palestinian faction ideologically opposed to armed struggle and a group excluded from the PLO for a number of years. He was deported to the Sinai desert in 1969 and to Lebanon in 1970.

Calm and unflappable, Mr. Shafi contrasts with his younger, talkative Israeli counterpart, Elyakim Rubinstein, 44.

"We know what they (the Israelis) are like. We have learned that they keep going on

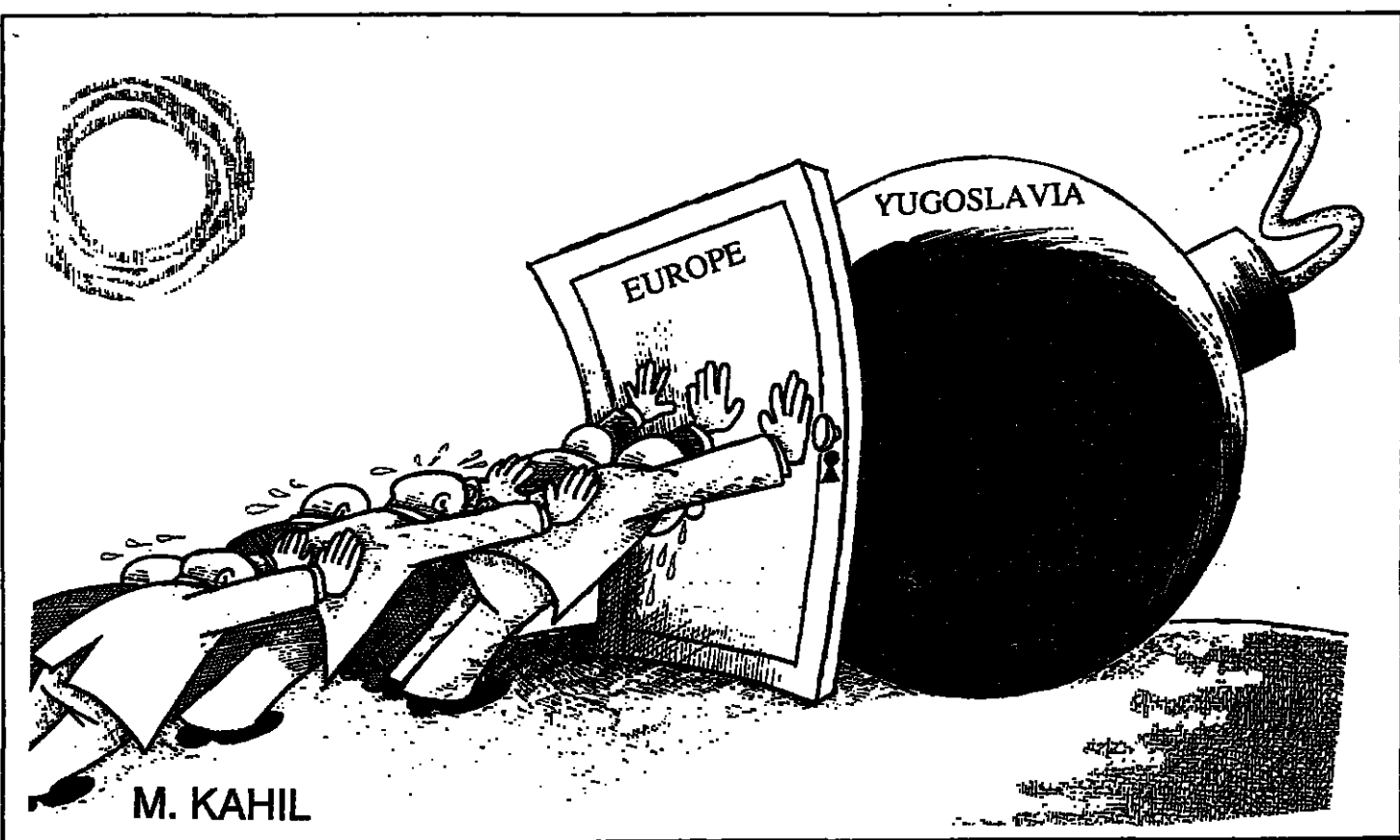
and on, and we have to keep going, too. Mr. Rubinstein is doing 90 per cent of the talking," said Yazid Sayegh, another Palestinian adviser. "The Israelis... want us to slow down and back off in frustration."

Ghassan Al Khatib, 37, another delegate and lecturer from Birzeit University, was imprisoned by Israeli military authorities from 1974 to 1977, then again in 1980 for six months and later detained for 10 days in 1989. Originally from the town of Nablus, Mr. Khatib studied developmental economics at Manchester University in England and also is a member of the old Palestinian Communist Party, now called the Palestinian People's Party.

Mahmoud Aker, 48, a surgeon from Nablus who was trained in Edinburgh, said the first phase of the peace talks in Madrid in late October gave Palestinians the confidence that the decision to join the process "was the right decision," adding: "It was a unique opportunity for the Palestinian story to be narrated."

But another delegate, Mr. Erekat, 36, noted that the opening conference in Madrid "was just one centimetre on a 100-kilometre-long road."

"What's our alternative? We have none. This is the truth," said Mr. Kuttab.



Beyond Soviet break-up, vast changes sweep world

By Bob McMahon
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As 1991 neared an end, repudiation of communism, a growth in democratic movements and a surge in ethnic violence reshaped the world's political landscape.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union had centre stage. But the pace of change was no less dramatic beyond the Soviet borders.

In the Balkans, Serbs and Croats waged Europe's bloodiest war since World War II. In Africa, juntas and military dictators were swept away by winds of democracy blowing across the continent. In Southeast Asia, a fragile peace replaced a long-running war in Cambodia.

The year began with the world community rallying to boot Iraq out of Kuwait. But while the Mideast balance of power shifted away from war-devastated Iraq, Saddam Hussein remained firmly in control in Baghdad.

Longstanding authoritarian regimes also held sway in Syria, Burma, China, North Korea and Cuba. The Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was sworn in as Haiti's first democratically elected president, and ousted in a military coup within seven months. Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning to regain his nation's leadership.

South African President F.W. de Klerk repealed his white-ruled country's apartheid laws and moved to share power with the black majority. The prospects were clouded by opposition from right-wing whites and continued black factional clashes in the townships.

The warring factions in Cambodia's 13-year civil war signed a peace accord in October calling for elections, expected in 1993. But the country's painstaking

path to self-determination was marked by the political reemergence of the Khmer Rouge, the guerrilla group behind a reign of terror in the 1970s.

In the Soviet Union and Africa, the end of one-party regimes presented opportunities for reforms but also raised concerns about instability.

In Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev was still Soviet president, but the dissolving nation's powers shifted to Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, a hero of the botched coup by hard-liners on Aug. 18-21. The coup's aftermath spawned independence movements among nearly all the 15 Soviet republics and the removal of the Communist Party from power.

The country's old communist order committed "a sort of joint suicide" in its attempted takeover, said Jonathan Eyal, director of the Royal United Services Institute, a London think tank.

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the Baltic nations annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, achieved independence after the coup. In December, the Slavic republics of Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia announced a commonwealth of independent republics that were preparing to push aside the vestiges of central government rule.

Thus far, the Soviet break-up has produced relatively little bloodshed. But the vicious, 6-month-old civil war between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia highlighted the threat ethnic disputes pose to a new world order.

Yugoslavia's fragile, ethnically diverse federation of six republics was shaken by the June 25 declaration of independence by Croatia and Slovenia, the country's two richest republics.

"The year began with the hope that somehow they would be able to negotiate their problems... but the political will was more than common sense," said

said Milan Andrejevich, a Yugoslav analyst for the research institute at radio Free Europe in Munich, Germany.

Slovenia and federal forces reached a truce after several weeks of fighting. But all-out war raged in Croatia, fuelled by the Serb-dominated federal army's concern about the Croatian republic's large ethnic Serb population and Croat worries over Serb expansionism.

Thousands were killed as federal troops and Serb insurgents fought Croatian forces and captured a third of Croatia's territory.

As Yugoslavia was splintering, leaders of 12 European Community nations met in December to approve treaties on political and monetary union.

And former East Bloc countries emerging from the decade of state-planned economies, rebuilt themselves politically with the hope of attracting Western aid.

Elsewhere in 1991, Africa was shaken by extraordinary change from the war-ravaged Horn of Africa to island nations off its Atlantic coast. Marxism and one-party rule fell in country after country after decades of oppressive, corrupt administration.

At least 19 African nations — many former French and Portuguese colonies — have now approved multiparty politics since a wave of violent demands for democracy began sweeping the continent two years ago.

The changes can be linked in great part to the end of Soviet and U.S. support that accrued during the cold war, especially in the case of Ethiopia and Angola, one-time proxy states where two long civil wars ended in 1991.

"Some authorities lost an ideological and material prop with the collapse of communism... there was no longer that legitimizing argument," said

James Mayall, professor of international relations at London's School of Economics.

Western donor nations, Africa's main lenders, began demanding democratic and economic reform in exchange for aid to African governments.

The most recent case was Kenya, where President Daniel Arap Moi in December bowed to domestic and foreign pressure by offering to allow the legal existence of more than his own ruling party.

But an International Monetary Fund official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said pluralism will make life more complicated for Africans.

"The people want to see instant results," he said. "It's going to be difficult for a newly elected government to ask for additional sacrifices from its people."

In the African upheaval of 1991, devastating civil wars ended and longtime leaders, both famous and infamous, fell.

Ethiopia's Marxist president, Mengistu Haile Mariam, fled after 14 years of iron rule. The new transitional government in Addis Ababa has moved to spur private enterprise in one of the world's poorest countries.

Next door in Somalia, President Mohammed Siad Barre ended his 21-year rule by fleeing his country's civil war, which has killed 20,000 people. Northern Somalia, which has seceded from rest of country, permits opposition parties. Rival clans continued to wage a savage war in the south.

Angola ended its 16-year-old civil war, in which 300,000 people were killed.

Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's founding father, was soundly defeated in multiparty elections. During his 27-year leadership, the country slipped from one of Africa's wealthiest to one of its poorest.

After 'lost decade,' Latin America embarks on economic reforms

By Matt Spetalnick
Reuters

BUENOS AIRES — After a decade of economic stagnation, Latin America is now caught up in a fast-paced free market revolution.

A new generation of Latin American leaders is embracing capitalism, dismantling trade barriers, selling off money-losing state enterprises, creating new trading alliances and forging closer ties with the United States.

"Now that they've witnessed the failure of Marxism and protectionism, Latin Americans realise they have no choice but to remake their economies top to bottom," says Ambler Moss, U.S. ambassador to Panama under presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

With the old theories discarded, the region's economic reformers are embarking on a Latin American version of perestroika. In Argentina, President Carlos Menem has ordered the deregulation of the entire economy and put virtually everything the government owns on the block.

In Venezuela, President Carlos Andres Perez, who nationalised the oil industry in the 1970s, has made a political comeback as a convert to free enterprise and is now wooing foreign oil companies to return.

Foreign investors who shunned Mexico as a lost cause during the 1980s debt crisis are suddenly proclaiming it an economic miracle under President Carlos Salinas De Gortari.

Economists talk about the 1980s as the region's "lost decade." Latin Americans were subjected to everything from state socialism to right-wing dictatorship, but the results were usually the same — hyperinflation, rising foreign debt and zero growth.

In the 1990s, the region has come to be dominated by free traders preaching open markets and balanced budgets.

With varying degrees of success, they are working to crack down on tax evasion, attract foreign investment and rekindle economic growth.

As the capitalist revolution rolls forward, democracy is also becoming more firmly entrenched. All Latin American countries except Cuba and Haiti now have elected governments.

And President Fidel Castro of Cuba, while still railing against "yanqui imperialism," faces growing pressure to reform the island's communist system.

No longer caught in an ideological tug-of-war between East and West, most Latin American countries are aligning their

polices ever more closely with the United States.

Mr. Menem has become so unabashedly pro-American that even some stalwarts in his own Peronist Party are grumbling.

Argentina was the only Latin American country to send forces to the U.S.-led alliance in the Gulf war and later voted with the United States for a United Nations investigation of human rights in Cuba.

President George Bush's proposal more than a year ago for a vast free trade zone stretching from the North Pole to the tip of South America has spurred Latin American countries to speed up integration with their neighbours.

Setting aside 150 years of mistrust toward its rich "gringo" neighbour, Mexico has joined in historic negotiations with the United States and Canada for a North American free trade agreement.

But now the Bush administration is considering putting the plan on hold until after the November 1992 U.S. presidential elections to avoid accusations it is exporting jobs in the midst of a recession.

As Latin America makes strides toward integration, it is also showing signs of recovery. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is predicting growth of 2.25 per cent for Latin America in 1992, up from 1.2 per cent this year.

Economists warn that the process could be tripped up by the region's deep social problems. More than half of Latin America's population lives in poverty, and government belt-tightening is only increasing their numbers.

In purely economic terms, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina are the success stories of 1991. They have tamed inflation, reduced debt loads and primed their economies for growth.

Chile has continued a long-standing programme of reforms that has kept its economy the healthiest in Latin America.

Brazil stands out as the exception. Its economy shrank by four per cent in 1990 in the wake of a drastic economic programme imposed by President Fernando Collor De Mello.

But a new plan submitted to the IMF this month appears to offer new hope of curbing the sickly economy, struggling under a bitter recession and 25 per cent monthly inflation.

The plan stresses conventional austerity — higher taxes, tight controls on money, lower government spending and reduced protectionism — and rules out sudden shocks such as price freezes which have generally failed in the past.

Growing up in Damascus

By Katia Sabet

DAMASCUS — "I like living here. I find it has a more human dimension." Salma, a 20-year-old law student, has just returned to her native city after spending three years in Paris. She is glad to be back. As well she might. Damascus is a peaceful capital, lying in the shadow of and spreading up the lower slopes of the Qassioun Mountain. With its wide, tree-lined avenues, its tinkling fountains in every square and its spotlessly clean sidewalks, Damascus is a place where people don't feel dwarfed by their surroundings.

Even the traffic snarls have a benevolent air. They dissolve as quickly as they form, and during the brief period of inconvenience, drivers still manage to maintain their good humour. "Why should people hurry here?" asks Salma. "Distances are short. You can cross the town from one side to the other in less than 20 minutes. Everything is within easy reach. The university, the town centre, the embassies, the shopping district, the old town. It only takes five minutes to get up to the top of Mt. Qassioun."

High up on the scenic road which runs round the upper reaches of the mountain, outdoor cafes serve cool drinks and pieces of fruit that are so perfect and shiny that they look as if they are made of wax. This is the gathering point for Damascus' youth: As dusk turns to night, and as the town below becomes a carpet of multicoloured lights, the talks go on endlessly.

Farid, 27, is a painter. He is arguing earnestly against a suggestion that Damascus is a cultural backwater. "It's true that our cultural life is not obvious," he says. "There are no official events, but a great deal goes on at the grassroots level. We all have a strong attachment to poetry, classical Arab music and our literary heritage."

Young Syrians do indeed show a pride in their artistic and cultural traditions that is only found among the older generation in most other countries. A sure sign of the importance with which Syrians view their literature is the space devoted to it by the country's newspapers—most of them carry whole pages of literary criticism as well as short stories and poems sent in by readers. "We love to

meet and talk about literature," Farid notes. "We read a great deal, things that are written here and in other Arab countries, especially in Egypt."

Young Syrians also love to dance, but not to Western tunes. They prefer eastern rhythms, with steps based on traditional dances. "A lot of young people can sing and play the 'oud,' the lute," comments Arif, 25, who is studying to be a lawyer. "It's part of our tradition, and it lets us dream. Who knows? In the East, song can lead to great things."

In spite of the idyllic backdrop, Damascus' young have their problems, often the same ones as youngsters in Cairo, Algiers or Khartoum. Getting married is one of them. "Because of the economic situation," said Farid, "it's difficult for young men to provide the dowry which is traditionally offered to the fiancée. And a couple faces even more hurdles when it comes to setting up house together: Apartments are hard to find and expensive, and then there is the furniture to buy."

"That's one area where we would like to see traditions relaxed a little," said Arif,

laughing. "But they continue to hold, as strong as a rock."

"Would you prefer to elope and marry without so much as a cent?" quips Salma, a female student. "Not exactly. But sometimes the demands of the fiancée's family border on the absurd," Farid replies.

Their romantic vision is always tempered with a strong dose of pragmatism. "Of course, I want my marriage to be based on love," says Alia, 16. "But my husband must still have the ability to set up a home for us and provide for the children when they are born."

"Naturally, love is essential," says Farid. "I could never marry a woman I didn't love. But I don't believe in blind passion and I have no intention of letting myself get carried away with dangerous flights of fancy."

Unlike young generations from many other capital cities, they have largely escaped the drug scourge. "We have been warned about it, so we are on our guard," said Arif. "Education against drug-taking begins at primary school and this has had its effect."

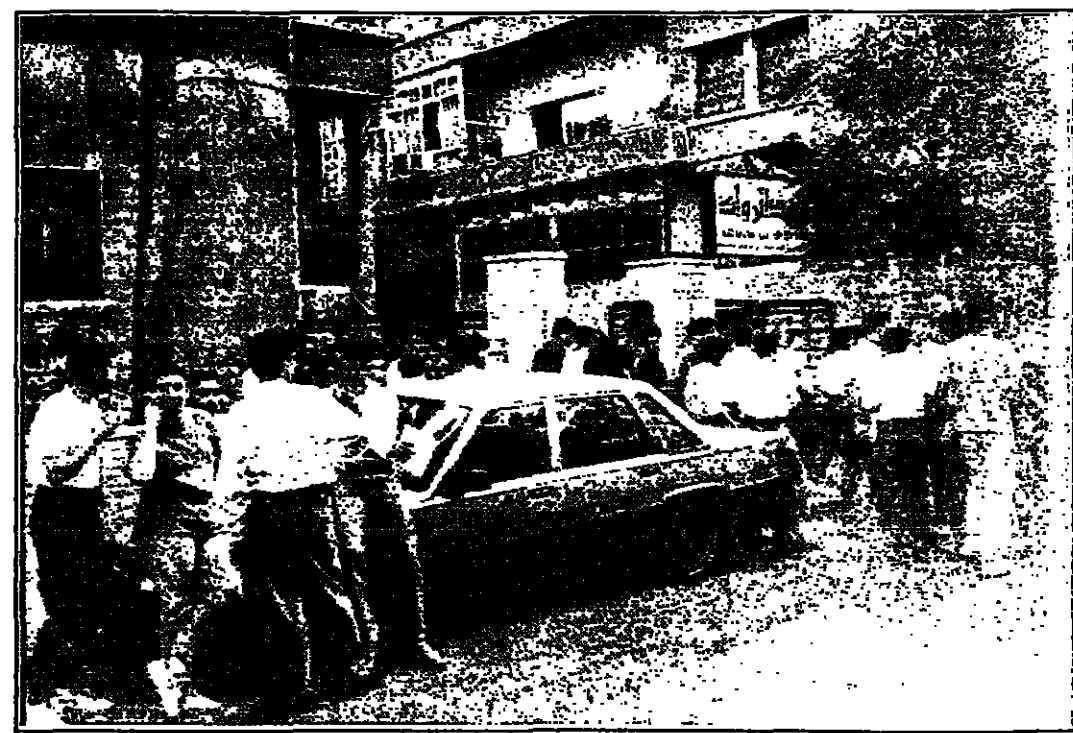
When politics surface in the conversation, the general

mood is far from optimistic.

"For decades, the situation in the entire (Mideast) region has been based on a series of injustices, so there is no point being surprised if we react as people who feel they have been wronged," said Farid. "At the moment, it's a case of wait and see. Perhaps something is at last going to happen."

Arif seems resigned to the violence that permeates regional politics. "Most people are sick of it," he says. "We were born into a world in which whoever is the strongest gets what he wants. It's not easy for us to suddenly start trusting in concepts such as justice and law. You only have to read the history books to understand why we feel the way we do."

Adds Farid: "There are two sets of rules, and that's something that we have been living with for generations. The Western media gives a distorted image of us. A lot of newspapers portray us as savages and terrorists. Our physical characteristics have become a symbol of danger, bomb attacks, just like the hook-nosed Jew once represented everything that was contemptible for a certain



Artistic and cultural traditions remain important for the young in Syria. Here students relax between classes in front of their school in Damascus.

type of racist propaganda. History is repeating itself."

"And yet, we know our own worth," says Baher, 27, a graduate from business school. "We know what we are capable of. Have you any idea of the success rate of young Syrians abroad, in places where they are out on their own and where the competition is merciless? It's high enough for their earnings to

be considered one of the chief sources of income for the state budget."

Moving abroad is a solution adopted by many: They go to the U.S., to the Gulf states. They work hard, save their money and come back home to set up in business.

Almost all of them do come back. "I spent seven years in Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia,"

says Raghib, a civil engineer. "But my goal, right from the outset, was to come back here to Damascus, to set up a contractor business. I could never have imagined spending my future in any other country. For me, there is nowhere in the world quite like Damascus, and I don't think I could really be myself in any other place." — World News Link

The incredible but true story of camembert cheese

By Jean-Marc Dupuch

PARIS — As Pascal so well put it: "If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have changed." That is the way of history, from unsuspected causes to unexpected results. Who, for instance, could have foreseen that, in November 1790, when the Constituent Assembly asked priests to swear to the civil constitution of the clergy, it was going to enrich gastronomy with a soft cheese which was to conquer the world?

Indeed, if the Constituent Assembly had not asked the clergy to take this oath, the priests would not have been divided into those who swore and those who refused. Consequently, one of the latter, whose name has unfortunately not been retained by posterity, would not have hidden in the manor of Marie Harel, a young peasant-woman in a charming little village in Normandy, called Camembert.

Naturally enough, just like all Norman peasants, Marie Harel made cheese with the good creamy milk from her white and brown cows, grazing off the lush grass beneath the (flowering) apple-trees. It

was no doubt quite a good quality cheese, but one without a future.

The young rebel, living as a recluse in the manor in forced idleness, put the time he had left from reading his prayer-book, to good use by teaching young Marie the secret of ripening cheese. It is not known for what reason this man of the cloth was such an expert on the fermentation of milk, but, anyway, he taught her the ten operations required to obtain a soft cheese with an aroma and a strong taste.

In 1791, Marie Harel thus sold a new kind of cheese in the markets in Camembert and the region. This cheese would, no doubt, have remained a highly appreciated regional speciality, but would never have become world famous, had it not been for a stroke of chance.

This stroke of chance came in the form of imperial help in the form of Napoleon III. In 1863, the emperor was in Normandy in order to open a new railwayline between Paris and Granville. Marie Harel's son-in-law offered the emperor the good old cheese. Napoleon III tried it, liked it and asked for its name. To his stupefaction, he

discovered that the cheese had a certain consistency, a white crust, a country taste, an unforgettable smell, a recipe, but no name.

"Well," said the emperor, feeling inspired, "We shall call it Camembert," and he ordered crates of it for the imperial court. But Camembert, which has a tendency to flow, would not have survived the long journey on the bed of straw on which it was displayed at the beginning. So the engineer Ridel invented the famous round wooden box, which has, since then, been a distinguishing sign of the cheese.

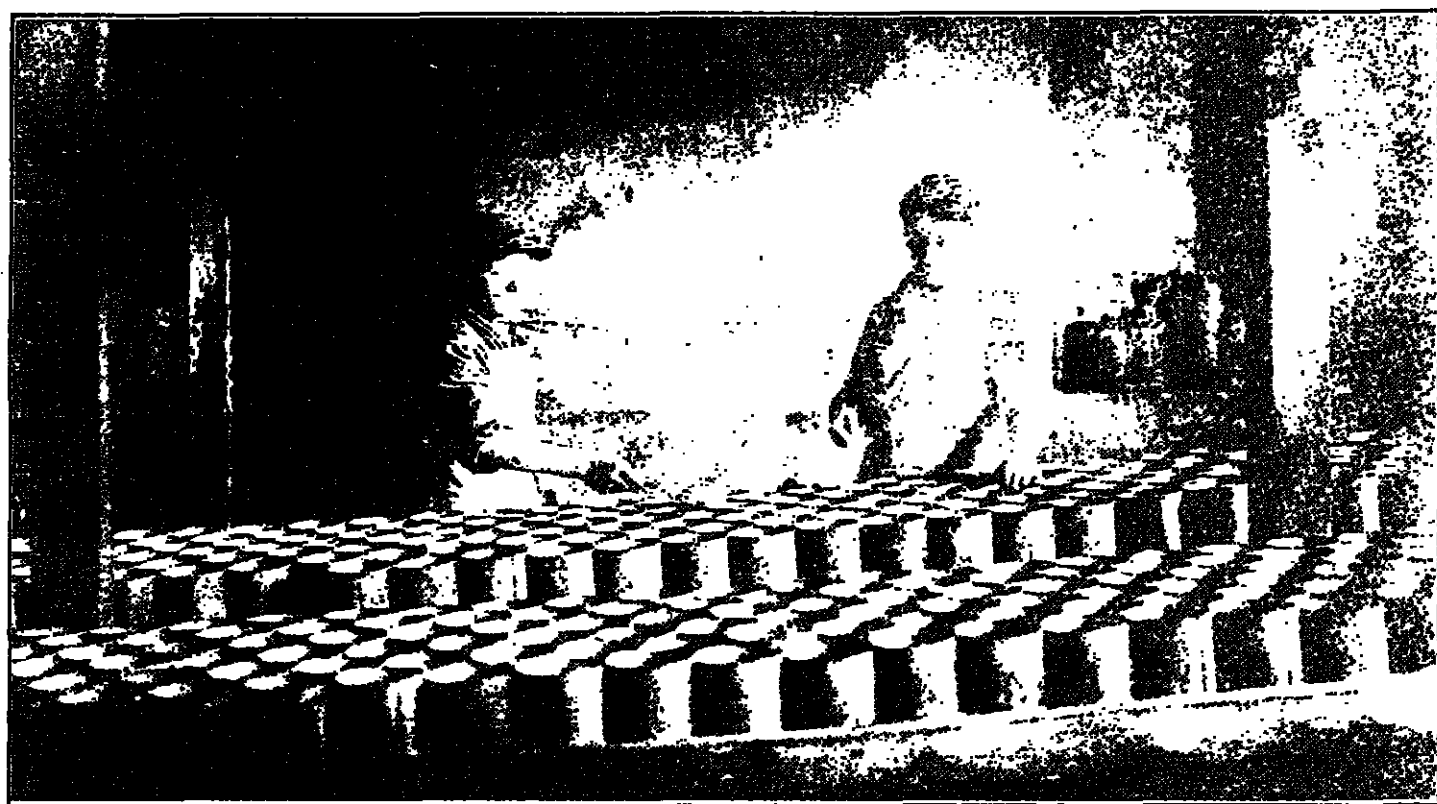
That is the true story of Camembert which has now become a profitable business. 700 million cheeses are produced a year. This represents about 170,000 tonnes of cheese of which practically 11,000 are sold abroad.

Imitation Camemberts proliferate on the planet like mushrooms. But the only real

Camembert is the one made in Normandy and so the General Constitutive Assembly of Real Camembert was set up in Normandy in 1990, to proclaim this fact.

However, even in this region, industrialisation and pasteurisation produce masses of standard articles with neither taste nor smell and these cheeses, which would not have received the blessing of the good rebel priest, flood the supermarkets. Only quality controlled Camemberts, bearing the "Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée" label, made with raw milk and moulded with a ladle, respect the old recipe.

But the dozen or so traditional producers who perpetuate the original quality are worried. European standards are to ban them from export. In Brussels, just as in Paris two hundred years ago, there are still fortresses to be stormed — L'Actualite En France.



Making Camembert cheese in Normandy in 1927.

Researchers urge abortion pill studies

By Jacqueline Frank
Reuter

WASHINGTON — An international group of scientists have said the French abortion pill RU486 shows promise as a contraceptive and breast cancer treatment but anti-abortion forces have blocked important U.S. testing.

Dr. Etienne Baulieu, the inventor of the drug at the French-based pharmaceutical company Roussel-Uclaf, said the company feared retaliatory boycotts of products made by its affiliates if it were offered for medical research in the United States.

"It is clear they have been discouraged by political difficulty. I am optimistic because I believe science is offering something positive," Dr. Baulieu said at a congressional subcommittee hearing. The German-based

Hoescht AG is the majority shareholder of Roussel-Uclaf and Hoescht-Celanese Corp is its U.S. subsidiary.

France legalised the drug in 1988, and since then 100,000 women have taken it to induce abortion. RU486 can be taken up to 7 to 10 weeks into pregnancy and causes the uterus to shed its lining.

Roussel-Uclaf's marketing director Ariel Mouttet told the subcommittee staff the company's research and sales of the drug had been affected by anti-abortion politics in the United States.

A subcommittee staff memo quoted Mouttet as telling them the firm had chosen to test the drug's effectiveness in breast cancer in Canada rather than in the United States despite the eagerness of U.S. cancer research institutes to participate.

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Tact — the forgotten art

By Maha Addasi

HOW people break news varies from one person to another, but the fact remains that the methods used are not taught in school curricula, but acquired in real life.

So you get people with a gradual approach in breaking news. Take this for example:

A person who starts a sentence with "let me tell you this slowly..." is someone who prepares you for a burst of bad news. Whereas the more popular approach today is similar to the following scenario:

"Oh Jim how are you doing? And how are the kids? Let's have a cup of coffee together. By the way you're fired."

I think the latter is the more popular approach because people have learned that expressions of shock can be a source of "amusement." But then again, it is very difficult to break bad news tactfully. Tact and bad news are a contradiction in terms like "raw cooked" or "jumbo slims." So what people figured was why not make the most of a bad news.

It seems appropriate to mention here that some people do break news that is not meant to be publicised at all and therefore when you are totally outraged, say indignantly that "You never said it was a secret..."

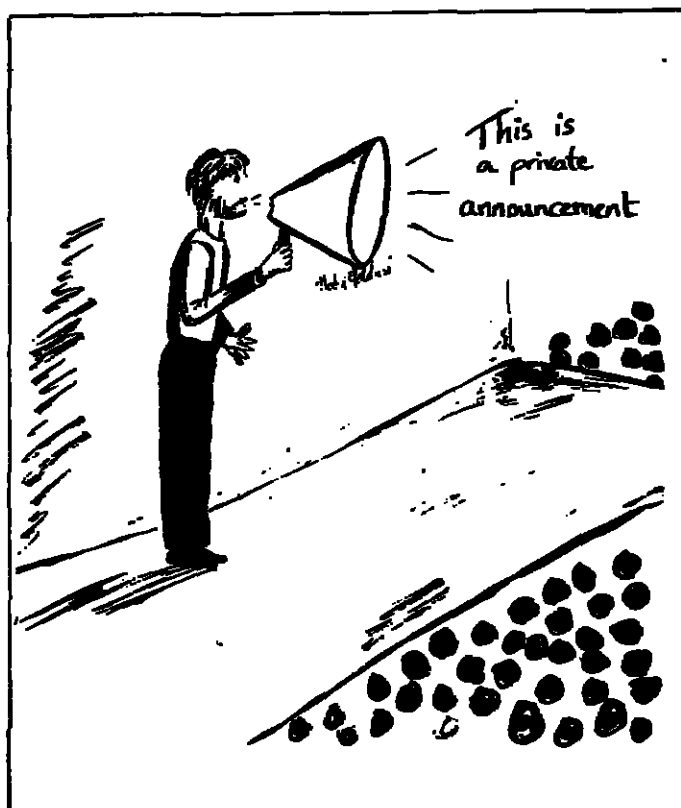
Remember that this type of people can be the perfect transmission mechanism when you actually want news to be spread. Everyone, but everyone, knows that person who will spread news twice as fast when you add "this is a secret" to the story.

Yet another type of people are those who feel they absolutely must keep to their moral code and never ever lie about anything even if their lives depended on it. "What do you think of my new green dress with orange polka dots?" the wife asks her husband.

"I think it is a painful sight and the ugliest thing that I have ever set eyes on dear," he answers "tactfully."

The flip side of this scenario is someone who tries to make things better by "hiding" the truth but then again, not hiding it very well:

"I put the bird outside the cage so that I could clean it



and it flew away," the mother says, hiding the fact that the bird had "kicked the bucket." But then the girl wants to dump something in the trash can and finds the dead bird at the top of the trash!

So to prevent such tragedies from happening, I think it is best to teach the art of tactfulness in schools. I suggest they cut down on physics or chemistry classes and put "tact" instead.

I know that you physicists and chemists out there are going to feel outraged by this comment, but then again, I never said I was tactful.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Thursday, Dec. 19

1912 — Germany, Britain and Italy blockade Venezuela.

1939 — Civil war starts in Honduras.

1915 — British troops begin withdrawal from Sulva and Anzac in Gallipoli in World War I.

1941 — German dictator Adolf Hitler faces military setbacks in World War II, dismisses his chief of staff and takes personal command of German army.

1965 — War breaks out in Indochina as troops under Chi Minh launch widespread attacks against French.

1961 — Goa and two other Portuguese enclaves on Indian west coast fall to Indian invaders.

1962 — Senegal's President Leopold Senghor takes charge of government in Dakar after ouster of the West African nation's premier.

1971 — Pakistan's President Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan quits office after military defeat in fighting with India in East Pakistan.

1972 — U.S. Apollo 17 spacecraft splashes down on target in Pacific Ocean, ending U.S. Apollo programme of landing men on moon.

1985 — Muslim gunmen kidnap 10 Christians in Beirut, Lebanon, stepping up campaign of terror.

1983 — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar asks Security Council approval of 70-member peacekeeping force to monitor withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

1990 — Albanian authorities formally recognise country's first non-Communist party.

Friday, Dec. 20

1912 — London Peace Conference between Turkey and Balkan states.

1922 — Fourteen republics of Russia form Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

1928 — Britain recognises Nanking government (Kuomintang) of China.

1954 — France sends 20,000 troops to Algeria.

1957 — European Nuclear Energy Agency is inaugurated.

1972 — Gunmen kill eight men and wound five others in one of bloodiest days in Northern Ireland conflict.

1973 — Spain's Premier Luis Carrero Blanco is killed when assassins bomb his car in Madrid.

1985 — Three gunmen end one-day siege of courtroom in Nantes, France, and release all but two of their original 30 hostages as they head for airport getaway.

1986 — Up to 30,000 students march for democracy through streets of Shanghai in China's largest demonstration since era of Cultural Revolution.

1989 — 12,000 U.S. troops deployed to Panama join 12,000 U.S. troops already in place to overthrow government of General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

1990 — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze resigns suddenly, warning parliament that hardliners are pushing country toward dictatorship.

Saturday, Dec. 21

1620 — Pilgrims go ashore from ship Mayflower at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, in United States.

1921 — Russia and Turkey form alliance.

1934 — Bolivia's President Daniel Salamanca is overthrown in military coup.

1942 — British 8th Army reoccupies Benghazi in Africa in World War II.

1953 — Iran's former Premier Mohammad Mosaddegh is sentenced to three years in prison for trying to lead revolt against Shah.

1960 — Saudi Arabia's Premier Emir Faisal resigns, and King Saud takes over government.

1961 — Moise Tshombe agrees to end secession of Katanga.

1967 — Louis Washkansky, first man to undergo heart transplant, dies in Cape Town, South Africa, 18 days after surgery.

1971 — Kurt Waldheim, Austrian diplomat, is chosen secretary-general of United Nations.

1972 — East and West Germany formally sign treaty ending more than two decades of official enmity.

1975 — Terrorists raid meeting of Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, Austria. Eleven delegates and others are taken hostage, and two guards are killed.

1988 — Sudan government confirms it aborted coup attempt previous week and arrested participants in plot.

1989 — Nicolae Ceausescu declares state of emergency in Timisoara after tens of

thousands of protestors fill the streets in mass demonstrations.

1990 — Albanian government orders removal of all statues and symbols bearing Josef Stalin's name.

Sunday, Dec. 22

1905 — Insurrection of Moscow workers; revolution in Persia begins.

1929 — Round-table conference opens between British viceroy and Indian party leaders on dominion status for India.

1942 — U.S. heavy bombers raid Japanese-occupied Rangoon, Burma, in World War II.

1956 — Last Anglo-French forces leave Port Said, Egypt, following Suez war.

1958 — France and Egypt sign trade pact.

1963 — Greek liner Lacomia catches fire and sinks in North Atlantic with loss of 150 lives.

1968 — Eighty-two crewmen of U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo are released by North Korea at Panmunjom, 11 months after their capture off North Korea.

1975 — Commandos end 20-hour siege of Vienna, Austria, headquarters of world oil cartel, take hostages and airliner provided by Austria, and begin flight that takes them to several Middle East capitals.

1985 — Winnie Mandela, defying expulsion order, is arrested by police who drag her from her Soweto, South Africa, home.

1988 — South Africa signs accord at United Nations granting independence to Africa's last colony, which will become black-ruled nation of Namibia.

1989 — Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu flee Bucharest.

1990 — Lech Walesa sworn in as Poland's first popularly elected president.

Monday, Dec. 23

1861 — Sultan of Turkey agrees to unification of Moldavia and Wallachia as Romania.

1920 — French and British approve convention fixing boundaries of Syria and Palestine.

1940 — In World War II, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill urges Italians to rid themselves of dictator Benito Mussolini.

1941 — U.S. forces on Wake Island in Pacific surrender to Japanese in World War II.

1948 — Tokyo's former Premier Hideki Tojo and six other Japanese World War II leaders are executed in Tokyo.

1964 — Typhoon hits Ceylon and southern India, causing heavy death toll.

1969 — Summit conference of Arab leaders in Rabat, Morocco, ends in disarray after quarrels over joint efforts to take action against Israel.

1972 — Earthquake that struck Managua, Nicaragua, is reported to have taken up to 10,000 lives.

1986 — U.S. aircraft Voyager lands in California's Mojave Desert to become first aircraft to circumnavigate globe non-stop without refueling.

1989 — U.S. sends 2,000 reinforcement troops to Panama to combat unexpectedly stiff resistance from Panamanian troops loyal to ousted General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

1990 — Slovenes vote overwhelmingly in favour of secession from Yugoslavia.

Tuesday, Dec. 24

1650 — Edinburgh Castle in Scotland surrenders to forces of Oliver Cromwell.

1798 — Britain and Russia sign alliance against France.

1800 — Plot is uncovered in Paris to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte.

1814 — United States and Britain sign Treaty of Ghent in Belgium, ending war of 1812.

1866 — Schleswig-Holstein is incorporated into Prussia.

1899 — Canadian and Australian volunteers land in South Africa.

1937 — Japanese troops capture Hangchow in China.

1942 — French administrator of North Africa, Admiral Jean Barlan, is assassinated in Algiers.

1951 — Libya becomes independent federation under King Idris I.

1988 — Soviet Union opens talks with exiled King of Afghanistan in Rome about new peace plan for his war-torn country.

1990 — Iraq recalls its ambassadors to United States, U.N. and West European nations for urgent consultations as Jan. 15 deadline for withdrawal from Kuwait approaches.

By The Associated Press

Essence of Christmas

By E. Yaghi

When I was small, Christmas in America signified the best time of the year. During the entire month of December, a frenzied build-up ensued of Christmas songs, snowmen, homemade Christmas wreaths hung on front doors, Christmas scenes propped on front yards and showered at night by soft golden lights and mandatory purchase of pine scented evergreen trees.

The steady enhancement of excitement culminated on Christmas morning. In a quiet corner of the room our Christmas tree positioned itself on a stand, decorated with old family favourite ornaments, silver tinsel and colourful red, green, blue and yellow lights which blinked on and off and offered a sense of serenity and peace. But best of all were the presents piled up under the tree which my brother and I would tear open after a long rest-less night of kindled anticipation. Dinner that day would invariably be a turkey stuffed and basted shut, swimming in rich brown gravy and popped in an oven, its fragrant aroma tempting hungry appetites. After dinner my brother and I would fight over the wishbone (I never got to make a wish!) and the remainder of Christmas Day would be spent listening to Christmas music, watching Christmas shows on television and cuddling favourite toys. At that time, to me, all the world was beautiful, full of love, harmony and peace. But then one sad day, I grew up, learned there was no Santa and discovered that just beyond the commercial boundaries of an artificial Christmas, hate thrived in the hearts of many and crazed fiends devoted themselves to invent new and better means of destroying each other and the world.

If only that same imaginative spirit of Christmas which existed in "never never land" could really live forever in the hearts of all men and there would be no more hate, greed, wars and the killing of children on this earth. Last year, people around the globe sang hymns of Christmas joy and spread deceptive cheer to one another. The annual lighting of the Christmas tree at the White House in Washington amidst a circle of Christmas well-wishers flashed on TV sets around the world but even as carols were being sung and candles lit, President Bush was busy plotting a war against women, babies and elderly Iraqis. In Bethlehem and elsewhere in Palestine, the Holy Land, Palestinian youth were dying at the clutches of the usurpers of their homes and land, financed by American dollars.

This year, Iraqis are still dying from the ravages of cluster bombs, smart bombs and destruction of their

socio-political and economic infrastructure, still suffer from the iron clench of economic sanctions and their nightmare goes on. They won't hear Christmas carols of peace sung in their streets or receive the greatest gift of all which is the gift of life. And in the Holy Land, the hub of God's three great religions, Israelis continue to plunder, pillage, murder, torture and violate the rights of innocent and helpless Palestinian civilians who have been the continuous victims of Zionist aggression for more than 43 years.

Although I have since become Muslim, December, still causes certain pangs of nostalgia where I remember a jolly red suited mythical Santa Claus with a fluffy white cotton beard, gifts beneath a forgotten tree and a childhood innocence in which I had painted all the world good and sweet. These memories are again revived by Christmas songs transmitted on Radio Jordan and TV. But I'm not a child anymore and I know that though the spirit of Christmas might still live in the hearts of some sincere people, for many, it is a dead and shallow ideal which contradicts the beautiful tradition of endeavours to spread true Christmas jubilation to all mankind. To big businesses, the Christmas season has become an industrialised and commercialised spree in which confounded and subjugated customers overspend and go into debt to please a loved one who a few days later will inevitably end up being cursed and cursed.

I wish that Christmas weren't only a fairy tale like Big Rock Candy Mountain where chocolate bars are piled up to the stars and people stand right there a counting. Or wouldn't it be great if we could sail off one night like Winken, Blinken and Nod in a wooden shoe boat and discover the place where fantasy lives? I wish that Christmas was a concrete essence and that peace would be an obtainable dream to all and that the spirit of Christmas which is loving, giving, sharing and cherishing life, would exist in everyone's heart throughout the year and that scientists would devote themselves to cure diseases instead of inventing better weapons to wipe out all living species off the face of the earth. I wish too, that there would be no more wars and that we wouldn't have to say to stricken children, "Oh, Lord, what have we done? Look what we've begun!"

Even though my longings may never come true, I do however, sincerely wish my beloved fellow Jordanians a very Merry Christmas. May God bless you one and all, Christian and Muslim, adults and small, not only during religious holidays, but everyday of the year and most of all, may we enjoy the blessings of peace.

Las Vegas glitter is still biggest draw for gamblers

By Leslie Adler
Reuter

LAS VEGAS — The face of gambling is changing in the United States.

But despite the mushrooming of legalised gambling across the country from Deadwood, South Dakota, to the waters of the Mississippi River, industry executives said Las Vegas will retain its place as the nation's premier gaming spot.

"One of the reasons Las Vegas works is because there's a plethora of attractions," said Daniel Lee, a gaming analyst with First Boston Co. "Each one's different. It's exciting," he added.

"There's no place like Las Vegas," Glenn Schaeffer, president of Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., whose

properties on the Las Vegas strip include the 4,000-room Excalibur and Circus Circus Hotel and Casino.

Many locations now offer slot machines and various table games, but Las Vegas offers the glamour and glitter of full-scale casinos and big-name entertainment.

"We don't see any fall-off in business here as a result of gambling opening up in other locations," said John Giovenco, executive vice president of Hilton Hotels' Nevada Gaming Operations.

Nevada's exclusive hold on legalised casino gambling in the United States fell in 1978 with the opening of casinos in Atlantic City, a seaside town in New Jersey.

Deadwood has boomed since legalised casinos opened there in November 1989, racking up \$400 million

in casino revenues over the last two years.

Last April, gambling began aboard riverboats cruising the Iowa waters of the Mississippi. Illinois riverboat gambling followed a few months later. Casino gambling also came to Central City, Colorado, this year.

Louisiana has legalised riverboat gaming for New Orleans but because the law permit casinos only on boats built after Jan. 1, 1992, floating casinos are not expected to begin operating there until mid-1993.

Industry observers and executives insist that the new sites are not slicing away revenues from Las Vegas.

"Atlantic City grew to be about the same size in casino revenues as Las Vegas, but Las Vegas has never had a down year," first Boston's

Lee said.

Atlantic City had gaming revenues of \$2.95 billion in 1990. Las Vegas in its 1991 fiscal year ended June 30 had a total of \$3.56 billion.

Where does all the money come from? Some executives speculate that it includes sums previously spent on illegal gambling or state lottery tickets, as well as from new consumers.

Las Vegas has been growing and adding attractions designed to make it a family entertainment spot as well as its traditional lure as an adult resort.

Circus Circus in June 1991 opened the Excalibur, a medieval-themed behemoth built at a cost of \$290 million. The complex offers amusement park-style entertainment as well as acres of slot machines and gaming tables.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 19

8:30 The Simpsons

Tonight's episode is on the town's preparations for Christmas.

9:10 NBA Basketball

10:00 News in English

10:20 Movie Of The Week

Mariko
A child named Mariko tells the story of Japan's participation in World War II. According to what her father, a Japanese diplomat married to an American, told her.

Friday, Dec. 20

8:30 Coach

Hayden surprises the family on Christmas Eve.

9:10 Shakespeare

10:00 News in English

10:20 Simon And Simon

The Simon brothers cross examine a doctor who they believe intentionally performed a surgery to one of his patient for no clear reason.

Saturday, Dec. 21

8:30 American Funniest Home Video

A new funny and amusing series that shows home videos recordings by American.

9:00 Encounter

9:30 Life On The Land

10:00 News in English

10:20 Feature Film

The Great Outdoors
Starring: Dan Aykroyd
Two families journey through the country. In spite of a few surprises the two families have a lot of fun.

Sunday, Dec. 22

8:30 Empty Nest

9:10 Murder She Wrote

Miss Lee, a TV host, is found murdered in her hotel room after covering a baseball game. Jessica investigates.

10:00 News in English

10:20 All The Rivers Run

Brenton is proven innocent. He returns to his boat to discover that his wife is about to marry Syrus. He follows her to the train station in an attempt to prevent her from marrying.

Monday, Dec. 23

8:30 Hey Dad

9:10 Nippon

Living Through A Miracle

Millions move from the rice paddies to the cities and the factories. Hosting the Olympics in 1964, Japan is able to show off its achievements to the rest of the world, bringing international acceptance and a moment of euphoria at home. But many Japanese question the close dependency on the United States.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Gabriel's Fire

Tis The Season

Christmas season is around and you cannot steal anybody's memories or dreams no matter what you do.

Tuesday, Dec. 24

8:30 Who's The Boss

Tony and Angela go to a funeral. While they are at the funeral, Jonathan and his girlfriend take Tony's car for a ride.

9:10 Our House

10:00 News in English

10:20 French film

Wednesday, Dec. 25

8:30 After Henry

Sarah and her family start preparing for a gathering on Christmas Eve, which reminds her of her husband who passed away.

9:10 Voice Of The Planet

The Sacred And Profane
An interesting documentary on water, its use and pollution by people.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Law And Order

A blonde girl shoots two black men who try to molest her. Police investigates to find that the two men were rapists.

هنا من الوطن

Operas in Arabic — a new but expanding art form

By Dalia Baligh

The Associated Press

CAIRO — Lights dim. Curtains rise. The orchestra strikes up the familiar score of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Figaro and his fiancée Suzanne start to sing. In Arabic.

Grand opera in Arabic? Why not? Italian operas have for decades been translated into English, French, Russian and German. Translations of opera, which many view as an elitist art, into other languages lets the common man understand and enjoy it.

joy it.

"The great operas are superb masterpieces, unique, like the pyramids. You cannot improve on them," said Raouf Zaidan, one of Egypt's top operatic baritone. "But you need to expose people to them. ... translation makes them more accessible."

Zaidan has performed Figaro in Italian, English and, most recently, twice in Arabic at Cairo's new Opera House. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in Arabic is next, in February.

"I had the surprise of my life," Zaidan said. "I discovered my own language was flexible, an operatic language."

Middle Eastern music, especially Egyptian, relies heavily on flutes, strings and drums to accompany the singing nasal and throaty quality of the Arabic language.

But Arabic can deal with operatic high, proven five times each day as muezzins call Muslims to prayer in a half-sung, half-chanted ritual.

Dr. Al Sadek, an Egyptian anesthesiologist living in Saudi Arabia, has adopted as his task the translation into Arabic of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 20-odd operas. It took him 12 to 18 months to translate Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan Tutte*.

At his own expense, he had the operas recorded on compact discs in Poland and started marketing them. But only in Europe, because Dr. Sadek couldn't find an Egyptian distributor.

But Dr. Sadek reported a gratifying audience response to last March's first performance of his translation of *Figaro* in Cairo.

Dr. Tarek Ali Hassan, the former director of Cairo's Opera House, said of the many barriers existing between opera and the Egyptian audience, language is the main one.

"If they can understand, the apparent screaming will sound natural and not something to laugh about," Dr. Hassan said. "I had seen several translations of operas to Arabic. They were hopeless. But Dr. Sadek finally came up with a vocally feasible translation."

Neveen Allouba, the soprano who sang Suzanne in *Figaro* at the recording studio and on stage, agrees the translation helps bridge a gap.

"Opera is a musical art that did not originate in Egypt. It is difficult to ask an ordinary audience to listen to music that is not familiar to them, and in a language they don't understand," she said.

"Singing in Arabic needed special work from all of us. We had to make the Arabic letters comply or yield to the operatic technique. Many Arabic letters come from the throat, and this is against operatic techniques. But then we got used to it. It became easy."

Julian Lennon hopes new album will enable him to break with past

By Peter Ramjag
Reuters

WASHINGTON — As a youngster Julian Lennon hated the way people pointed and whispered when he tagged along with his famous father during tours with the Beatles.

He knew what they were wondering: Would he buckle under the pressure of following in the footsteps of his father, John Lennon?

In an interview with Reuters, he said his latest album *Help Yourself* was an answer to the challenge of making his own way in the music industry.

Lennon, 28, eldest son of the murdered Beatle, said he had asked himself what his biggest career challenge was.

"And I figured, well, going into the music industry with my name. I always like a challenge in life and all through childhood I've had nothing but crap to deal with, and it built up after a while."

"As a kid people would start staring at you and whispering and you would say, 'What the hell are you talking about? What? What? Leave me the hell alone.'"

Inevitable comparisons started with the 1984 release of his debut album *Valotte* when he was 21. Critics treated him well at first, but by the time his second album *The Secret Value Of Daydreaming* was released, the honeymoon was over.

"I used to read everything that was written about me and initially all the stuff was great," Lennon said.

His brown western boots perched on a chair, white shirt open to the chest, a cigarette dangling from his lips, Lennon paused to remember: "Then it started going downhill."

Critics began calling him a flash in the pan, suggesting the only reason he was in music was because of his father.

"None of that was the case," Lennon said.

It was not the criticism that bothered him, he said, but the way too many people

were advising him what to do and how to sound on records.

After marginal sales of his third album *Mr. Jordan* in 1989, Lennon decided to take things into his own hands.

When the time came to begin work on the fourth album, a two-year project which resulted in *Help Yourself*, Lennon teamed up with veteran producer Bob Ezrin — known for his work with the group Pink Floyd and singer Peter Gabriel.

Ezrin was someone who "could take out of me what I believe I had in me," said Lennon.

Lennon handled vocals, guitars, keyboards, mandolin, bass and percussion programming on all the album's 12 tracks.

But the main opportunity on *Help Yourself* was for Lennon to exercise his songwriting talents. He has co-writing credits on all but one of the album's songs.

"Part of the quality of the songwriting is because of how inadequate a musician I am," said Lennon, who cannot read musical notes and plays by ear.

From over 200 tapes of original material, Lennon picked 40 songs before settling on the ones to make *Help Yourself* the "definitive Julian Lennon" product.

The album begins with the high-tempo *Rebel King*, described by Lennon as an emotional trip and a marked departure from past songs.

"There are so many styles going through this album that I really wanted the listener to take note right away that something different was going on here," he said.

As with previous albums, Lennon is prepared for listeners to pick this one apart as they try to see how much he learned from his father.

But he doesn't worry about it as much as he used to. "No matter what happens, whether the album's successful or not, it's not going to change my way of doing things," Lennon said.

"I'm not in competition here, you know."

Berlin Festival Weeks assumes new role

By Hellmut Kotschenreuther

BERLIN — The organisers

of the Berlin Festival Weeks (Festwochen) have their work cut out for them in the wake of German reunification.



This year's Berlin Festwochen performances included *Gogol's The Auditor*, performed by the Katona Jozsef Theatre of Budapest. Shown here, a scene from the play with Peter Blasko (municipal guard captain), Janos Ban (as Chesnokow), and Juli Basti (as wife of the municipal guard captain).

tion. Established in 1950, in the midst of the cold war, as an expression of determination, the Festwochen came to flourish and help symbolise the vitality and superiority of Western democracy in the city, especially after the Berlin Wall went up. The Festwochen did indeed succeed in demonstrating this in the four decades of its existence.

Of course, as was to be expected, east Germany aped the West Berlin Festwochen, countering with a festival of its own, the Berlin Festival Days.

The head of the West Berlin Festival, Ulrich Eckhardt, took it all in stride. He usually had more and better things to offer than his eastern competitors. When the first signs of the east-west thaw became noticeable — perestroika and glasnost — he was even able to indulge in a limited degree of cooperation. He didn't shy from contact and this courage paid off subsequently.

When unification approached and then actually took place, the Festwochen organisers suddenly faced a completely new situation: For one, the eastern festival closed its doors. The Festwochen, in the 41st year of its existence, organised an all-Berlin festival but suddenly found itself in the position where its existential legitimacy was in doubt. It became imperative to redefine its

purpose in the dramatically changed political landscape. With its previous mission accomplished, the question was whether there was a new one for them.

Ulrich Eckhardt is convinced it's there. The Berlin Festwochen, whose financial future is secure until 1995, will draw its meaning and justification from the fact that "Berlin will henceforth have the job of serving as a hub and broker between east and west in the new European system. What we're doing can't really be characterised by a term such as festival. We've essentially become a brokerage for exchange and mediation."

Of course, this doesn't preclude the Berlin Festwochen from wrapping its autumnal cycle of performances around a central theme. This year's theme was "the war against the Soviet Union" (1941-1945), and it was accompanied by an abundance of political and educational materials. A corollary theme, "art against war and violence," was incorporated, in wise anticipation, in a series of concerts composed by a group of aptly selected composers of Russian and Baltic origin.

The performances included Shostakovich's epic work, the Leningrad Symphony, performed by the Berlin Staatskapelle under the direction of David Shalton. Equally impressive was the composition

by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, performed by the Chamber Orchestra of Europe under the able baton of Gideon Kremer.

The Ensemble Modern provided a surprise success with an element of absurd theatricalisation in their rendition of the Russian composer Faradj Karayev and his piece "Stand der Dinge" (State of Matters).

Noteworthy, as well, among the nine composers heard in the cycle and the "musical anthology" — which concluded the Festwochen — on the theme "against war and violence," a treat among the performances, was a piece with four instruments and a speaker. Entitled *In memoriam*, it was composed by Katia Chemberdj, a young Russian female composer. Its sounds resembled a surrealist fantasy.

It's worth noting that both she and Pärt moved to Berlin not so long ago. Their presence, coupled with the arrival of many other artists in Berlin, fuels expectations that Berlin could again become, in the foreseeable future, what it had been in the twenties: A cultural capital not just for Germany but for Central and Eastern Europe as well — and all without nationalistic ambitions.

The stage presentations drew more attention during the Festwochen, including guest performances by the

Katona Jozsef Theatre and the Csiky Gergely Theatre, both from Hungary, and Ariana Mnouchkine's Theatre du Soleil from Paris. These attracted more attention than the musical renditions.

Each of these three companies presents a distinct approach in applying art against war and violence. Thus, the Katona Jozsef Theatre drew raves with a riotous parody of a Roi Ubu piece. They also presented a subtle deciphering of Chekhov's play *Platonov*.

The Csiky-Gergely Theatre (of Kaposvár, Hungary) earned applause with a Checkov production, a variant of the play "Three Sisters, in which they become trapped in the horrors of the Gulag Archipelago.

The Theatre du Soleil impressed audiences with its celebrated contemporisation of the *Atreid Trilogy*, performed in a radically esthetized and ritualized fashion. Its performance at the DEFA studios in Babelsberg (outside Berlin) made it the object of pilgrimage for theatre enthusiasts for nine days going.

In 1991, the Berlin Festwochen again managed to justify its meaningfulness and necessity. It remains to be seen whether the Festwochen will meet the challenge of becoming a cultural broker, an agency of exchange and mediation — IN Press.

Richie Havens ushers in new age

By Philippa Neave

NEW YORK — He is part of the Woodstock legend and has since become a legend to himself. Richie Havens

was the first to step out onto the stage before hundreds of thousands of fans and open the three-day mega rock-concert in August 1969. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Joan Baez and a host of other mythical rock and roll stars followed. Those were the days of flower-power and peace on earth. Some 20 albums and 30 years later, Richie Havens is still singing for peace and love. In his emotionally resonant ballads, Havens sends a message of tolerance and relentless optimism.

Now aged 50, Havens is still bursting with energy and believes that the ideals that motivated the 1960s beatniks are finally becoming mainstream. Today's awareness of the environment is an example: "We started the movement," he said in a recent interview. "We were out there communing with nature and the sun, it was a natural thing."

Havens and other artists like him can be credited for laying the ground for the "New Age" movement that has taken hold in the United States during the 1980s and as since spread to many parts of the world. While the 60s hippies were known for their "brown rice" generation, today's New

Age hippies are known for their organic farming, greater spirituality, natural remedies and environment conservation. What's new is that this time the movement is not marginal. "We discovered things our parents did not know. I feel the 1980s were an interim, the dawn before a new era. I feel we are on the brink of total potential," he adds.

Havens has put his undying optimism and unshakable convictions to work over the years and has inspired many projects. Two years ago he was one of the organisers of a major fund-raising to collect money for hundreds of "Chinese students who were in the U.S. during the Tiananmen Square massacre so that they would not be forced to return to China. He has worked for 22 years to raise money for native American Indians to help pay for higher education, drug and alcohol abuse programmes and to set up legal funds.

Havens wears a cluster of talismans around his neck and turquoise-embellished rings on each finger, tokens of gratitude and good-luck charms given to him by members of various Indian-American tribes. Says the singer: "Just about every minority in this country has problems because they don't know how to deal with the system. People come to this country but they don't know what they are up against. In the old days, a whole town would come out and put up a barn for a new family — everyone chipped

in and got the newcomers going. People have forgotten about that!"

Havens was born and brought up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York, now a ghetto where violence and drugs are the daily lot of most people. "I grew up there at a very special time, the whole world lived side-by-side, there were Germans, Jews, Italians, Poles and anybody else you can think of, and people helped each other." In his deep, unmistakable gravelly voice, Havens recalls that when his grandmother arrived from Barbados in the 1930s, she and a group of 20 families in the neighbourhood helped each other. "They put 20 bedrooms in a flat. Every week the family whose numbers was up would receive \$20 from each of the other families. That way, they got a lump sum, made improvements in the home. That is how my grandmother bought her own home: hers was probably one of the first black families to own a house before 1940!"

"I have always been haunted by this methodology," adds Havens. "Think of it: There are 40 million children in public school in this country. If every child brought \$1 a week to school and put it in a fund, you would have \$40 million to spend on education. Most kids in this country could go to college on the interest alone!"

In fact, Havens wants to

launch a programme based on this idea and called "A Dollar for Change." "It could be done at a community level," he explains. "People could put in \$1 a week into the pot, invest and not touch it for a year and then use the interest for all sorts of things. Every community could do that. There could be food and shelter for the needy and a drug abuse or health centre at every corner. We don't have to wait for the government to do things for you. We have become dependent, and in fact we're dependent on nothing because the government does nothing. It has just given us another dependency: complaining. We need to create a new mind-set."

Havens, who says he has toured the world 23 times, has had ample opportunity to experience other cultures and see how other people live. "One thing I have seen outside the Western World is unity. People naturally help each other. Indigenous people and tribal people have maintained a sense of unity. Everyone in the village has a job and children are given the opportunity to be children."

Havens, who has two daughters of his own, places a great deal of hope and confidence in today's younger generation. Fourteen years ago he cofounded the North Wind Undersea Institute, located on New York's City Island. The institute which was designed as a "hands on" museum for inner-city kids so

that they could learn about the sea, soon developed into a full scale natural history museum. It regularly hires boats and a decommissioned submarine to take children out to sea.

A bigger project that now involves thousands of children around the U.S. and is fast expanding abroad was also set up by Havens to help teach children "everything they want to know about the Earth." Called the Natural Guard, the programme has been introduced as an after-school activity. Explains Havens: "We take the kids out on field trips; once they can touch it, feel it and smell it, they want to know about it. They can ask the teacher any question they want about the environment. They learn and they take that back to their community and start programmes themselves in their local parks or gardens. The rainforest is something far off with trees and the jungle, the kids didn't know they were living in an environment."

"Over the years," adds Havens "I have learned that kids want to be involved and to be a part of something larger. There is a new consciousness that has been raised in recent years. Today, kids know they are not just living in Brooklyn or Chicago, they know they are living on a planet. They are the first real planeters. We need to learn from children and native people how to take better care of the Earth."

Another aspect of the Natural Guard programme which also operates during the summer vacation, is designed to teach children skills such as carpentry and electricity which they put into practice by fixing up derelict buildings. "Kids work. We don't tell them what to do. They ask the questions and they come up with the solution: Our job is to give them the tools to do it," says the rock star. "Hands on from now on: That's my motto, because I know if you give kids the tools, they never want to put them down. Kids are very entrepreneurial. They have to grow up knowing how to make Mom smile, for a start!" In a very successful project, the Natural Guard chapter in New Haven, Connecticut, put children in touch with scientists and college students at Yale University's School of Forestry. "Teenagers in Middle School work with Yale College students two hours a day and learn from them."



A rock star with a social conscience, Richie Havens devotes himself to improving the lives of children and the underprivileged.

The programmes are designed to be self-sustaining," he explains. Meanwhile, he is still striving to realise his own dream: Opening a large children's centre. "I am looking for a defunct army base with a lot of land," he says, "and have it as a permanent centre. The central point would be a giant classroom where we would host conferences four times a year. We would bring activists and community leaders to talk about cooperating better and to teach kids how to build an ecologically sound community. I want to give kids the opportunity, bring them from India, the Middle East, everywhere to show them how and what can be done. The centre would run a large summer camp for kids. I intend to have a central computer to share information. It would be a life-line for kids around the world. The quick-

er we let them talk to each other, the safer we are going to be."

Havens believes that he has a responsibility as a musician because of his two gold records and a Grammy Award, countless television appearances and songs for half a dozen motion pictures.

"I am in the communications business. I have never been in show business," he emphasises. "Artists who have something to say for the world have to change their label to communications."

"We have enough money and intelligence — all the musicians in the world should get together and create an association. They have done that to raise money for specific reasons, but it should become a permanent umbrella to treat the cause rather than the symptoms." — World News Link.

An alternative to Aspirin

By Max de Lotbiniere

LONDON — Ever since the Aspirin was invented, the international pharmaceutical industry has convinced the world that the surest way to cure man's most common ailment — headaches — was to swallow that familiar little pill, or one closely related to it. Joseph Corvo, a self-styled natural healer and lifetime practitioner of zone (massage) therapy, wants to dispense with the drugs. He describes his technique in a slim volume to be published in the U.K. in December. The title promises "Joseph Corvo's Instant Headache Cure." This, according to Corvo, signals the start of the zone therapy revolution, which should bring less reliance on drugs and switch the emphasis to natural healing processes such as massage and acupuncture.

Until now Mr. Corvo has only been able to share his secret with the relatively few people he treats personally. That includes members of the royal family and show business personalities, but through this book he hopes his technique will reach millions. It's an exciting prospect to meet the man whose goal is to become the drug industry's least favourite person. He is based in London where he has his practice, and in spite of a very busy schedule an appointment is fairly easy to arrange.

But, rather like the unmasking of the wizard in the film "The Wizard of Oz," Mr. Corvo, at first sight, does not seem like a man fitted for his task.

He's slight, almost frail-looking for someone who claims to have the secret to preserving health and beauty. Another surprise is his broad Yorkshire accent. Yorkshire has a reputation for producing people who are down to earth and blunt spoken and, in that respect, Mr. Corvo is a true son of Yorkshire. "Put it this way," he quips when asked his age, "I'll never see 60 again."

As he starts to describe the benefits of zone therapy, his enthusiasm is compelling: "The whole idea," he explains, "is that the body works on electro-magnetic lines — if you can imagine lines of electricity flowing down from your head to your feet. Terminal nerve endings are in all extremities of the body: feet, hands, face, ears, head. Pressure-point massage on these areas releases electro-magnetic pulses throughout the body. These forces act with regenerating power in glands and organs, upon whose efficiency our health depends."

Zone therapy "brings about a state of well-being which can be achieved simply by using your fingers. Not only does it make you feel young, it gives you an inner and outer beauty which will last for the rest of your life."

Mr. Corvo's demonstration, as he speaks, consists of holding your hand and, with the tip of his thumb or index finger, pressing various places on your palm, the tips of the fingers, and the base of the thumb. The pressure is applied in a circular motion.

Massage, as a therapy for pain relief is not new. It is most widely known in the west as reflexology, but Mr. Corvo is dismissive of this form of alternative medicine, not because he doesn't think it works, but because it is too complicated. "Compared to reflexology," he says, "zone therapy is child's play. This is something that you can do to yourself, by just following some simple rules. You don't need years of training."

His instant headache cure is certainly simple. Aimed at dealing with the pain but also the cause, including hangovers, it is set out in a seven-point, seven-minute programme. First, he asks the patient to imagine that he or she is pressing the pain out through the top of the head; the first manoeuvre is to press, with the thumbs upon the roof of the mouth. The second step involves the hands. With palms apart, join the fingertips of one hand to corresponding fingertips of the other, and then press together as hard as possible. Alternatively, if you have an aluminum comb, press the teeth on to the fingertips, just below the fingernails.

Step three, according to

Mr. Corvo, is the most direct approach for dealing with the causes of headaches. It involves "eliminating blockages in the pressure points on the hand." Most of the pressure points for stage three are located on the thumb, but the rule throughout is that if a particular pressure point gives you pain as you press it, this is because it is "congested" and it needs to be worked on some more. So, each pressure point on the hand (Mr. Corvo's book contains diagrams pointing them out) relates to an organ or gland in the body. When you find the pressure point that hurts, you know which part of the body is affected, he says.

For hangover sufferers who might want fast, early-morning relief, the pressure point for the liver — the organ abused — is on the left hand side of the right palm, about 2 cm below the base of the little finger. Press this hard enough, claims Mr. Corvo, and you won't need pills.

The second part of Mr. Corvo's Instant Headache Cure aims to eliminate a persistent or recurring headache. Again, pressure points on the hands are important, but he also includes the head and feet. After one has worked through the programme, a simple relaxation technique is suggested. He recommends taking 20 minutes, when you know you will not be disturbed, and lying flat on the ground, head resting on a

telephone directory, breathing deeply. Imagine "the pain leaving your body and your mind," Mr. Corvo says. "The power flowing through you will make this a reality."

According to Dr. Frank Clifford-Rose, a leading neurological consultant and director of the London Neurological Centre, the reality of headache pain relief is not quite as simple. Like Mr. Corvo, Dr. Clifford-Rose is interested in establishing what type of headache a patient might be suffering from. But, with nearly 100 separately identified types of headache, ranging from cluster to tumour, he prefers to stick to "proven pharmaceutical methods," in other words, drugs.

Interestingly, some of the headaches Dr. Clifford-Rose treats are caused by drugs. "Too many drugs can be a danger and some headaches are caused by analgesics," he admits. And he does not totally dismiss Mr. Corvo's massage approach: "For some types of headache, massage could well help, but it is not an instant cure ... Sometimes a patient may not respond to treatment with specific pharmaceutical methods, and in these cases we have no objection to the patient seeking other forms of treatment, like acupuncture." But as far as he is concerned, none of the alternative methods of treatment have been proven to work.

The burden of proof does



Joseph Corvo demonstrates one of his techniques

not seem to bother Mr. Corvo, who believes his zone therapy is based on powers beyond the understanding of medical science. Each day he turns his thoughts to the power that keeps him alive, the "life force," he explains, and in a state of relaxation he concentrates on this force. "I start building up a rapport with my life force, saying, 'look, you are the power that keeps me alive, you have the supreme control over life and death. I know that you can take away all this stress in my life.' If you concentrate on building up that rapport with your life force speaking to it internally, asking it to get rid of all your problems, it never fails. I have done it every day of my life."

Mr. Corvo says he inher-

ited his powers as natural healer from his mother. He recalls, aged 7, putting his hands on people with pains. "It wouldn't matter what kind of complaint it was, I simply put my hands over the area. My mother was a healer and I found I had the gift too." He also discovered that he was a natural musician and after World War II he received a classical opera training in Italy. He continued to use his powers to help those around him, but it took a meeting with a disciple of Dr. William Fitzgerald (the man Mr. Corvo credits with the discovery of zone therapy) to convince him that he should incorporate it into his healing capabilities.

"I have worked with the basic techniques of zone ther-

apy over the years and developed a whole treatment through experience. Not someone comes to me with a complaint, I can diagnose quicker than an X-ray machine." One might want to get a second opinion from an X-ray machine, in any case Mr. Corvo has a satisfied group of clients — discretion does allow him to reveal the members of the British royal family he numbers among them. And if his headache cure does not suit everyone, it does have a big advantage over drugs and their sometimes hazardous side-effects.

As Mr. Corvo notes, "it doesn't do you any good, won't do you any harm," World News Link.

New anti-nausea drugs help in treatment of cancer patients

By Catherine Arnt

REUTERS
LONDON — Cancer patients are victims twice over. The disease itself is traumatic but the treatment carries such debilitating side effects that it can seem even worse.

It is an increasingly important issue as cancer becomes more and more a curable

disease. Doctors say many patients find the side effects so horrific that they delay or even discontinue treatment of the cancer.

But a new class of highly effective anti-nausea drugs is now winning praise from doctors and patients for its dramatic impact on the quality of life of cancer victims.

Zofran, made by Glaxo Holdings, and Kytril, from Smithkline Beecham, result from a surge of pharmaceutical research into better management of the side-effects of cancer therapy.

Those effects can include exhaustion, hair loss, vomiting and nausea so severe the mere sight of a hospital pro-

vokes an anticipatory attack.

"It is hard for us to imagine the impact of nausea and vomiting on a patient's perception of treatment and indeed of his or her whole life. Some patients would rather die, literally, than suffer the indignity of such a side effect," said Kate Smith, a chemotherapy research nurse

at Clatterbridge Hospital, near Liverpool in northwest England.

The drug industry expects demand for Zofran and Kytril to reach \$2 billion in the next few years.

Medical experts predict the drugs may increase the number of patients able to withstand chemotherapy from about 40 per cent now to between 50 and 60 per cent.

Zofran was first approved in Europe in March 1990 and in the United States this year. Kytril will be available in Britain in January and is pending approval in the United States.

Several other companies are developing similar drugs. The drugs target a powerful chemical in the body called Serotonin that controls mood and appetite.

Serotonin, also called

5HT, carries messages from the brain to millions of nerve cells throughout the body, including those controlling the muscles in the gut.

Serotonin related drugs have revolutionised certain areas of medical care in the last three years. They include Prozac, the world's best-selling anti-depressant, and Imigran, the first effective treatment for migraine headaches.

The anti-nausea drugs home in on a particular protein on the surface of a nerve cell called the 5HT3 receptor, a switch that activates the muscles in the gut when Serotonin binds to it. By blocking this receptor, the drugs can almost completely stop the nausea and vomiting associated with most types of cancer therapy, according to medical studies.

Prior to Zofran, the most

commonly prescribed anti-nausea drug for cancer patients was Metoclopramide.

But Metoclopramide and most other anti-nausea drugs can cause serious side effects of their own such as twitching and drowsiness. They also must be given in hospital intravenously over several hours and have very limited effectiveness.

Zofran and Kytril require only a five-minute intravenous infusion with a follow-up of tablets for Zofran, so they can be administered on an out-patient basis.

Cancer specialist Mike Soucoup, of Glasgow's Royal Infirmary, says the drugs have revolutionised the prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy.

"With you speak to the patient and see what a re-

markable difference they make to the patient's quality of life it is extremely impressive," he said.

The two drugs both carry a high price tag: £36 (\$65) for single infusion of Kytril and £15 (\$27) for each dose of Zofran, with between one and three doses required. But doctors said the drugs can be more than justified because the drugs allow patients to leave hospital earlier in many cases, and make a big difference to their quality of life.

The drugs may have other far-ranging uses as well. Glaxo is currently seeking approval for Zofran as a powerful anti-nausea treatment and the drug is in early clinical trials for the treatment of schizophrenia, associated memory loss and certain addictive behaviours.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

MIXED COMPANY

By Frances Burton

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All compromises tried

(Continued from page 1)

back and an Arab-Israeli track. So really they are going back on what they were declaring all the time, that they want to speak directly with the Palestinians. And here we are, they don't want to talk with us. They want to talk with us with the support of the Jordanians. It is our privilege to be with our Jordanian friends but things must be in order, according to the ground rules stipulated in the letter of invitation, and certainly it reflects negatively on their previous calls for meeting directly with the Palestinians. And now they renege on their repeated offer to meet with the Palestinians on the negotiating table.

So we are sorry that this has reached this stage, this impasse. We are not despairing. We are still committed to the peace process. We hope by the help of the sponsors that there will be a resolution for this impasse. Thank You.

Dr. Majali: And I said we are waiting. We are still in Washington and we will be in Washington today, tomorrow, in any day they decide that they are going to resume the meeting. So we are here, waiting for a decision on their side to come to reason. Q: Dr. Majali, what do you have to hear from the Israelis for another meeting to take place?

Dr. Majali: Well, if they accept that we will meet on the tracks, as being stipulated, as we have talked in the last six days of meetings, that they will meet on the tracks, we will sit and talk real substance. So far we have been dragged and dragged to be in the procedure and on the procedure, and they've set the time to leave.

So I don't know, I mean, we are in such a situation that we could not accept to be dictated to.

...We have told them let us go to the co-sponsors and talk to them. They may bridge. They may find some solution. They refuse the identity. They said we do not accept the idea of a sponsor. I asked them why, because at least they'll let us say we are friends and we go to another friend.

They refuse even the idea of another friend helping us to try to find something, especially after we discuss this for six solid days.

I think we had enough, so we had to have a friend of both sides and find a solution, if there is a solution.

Mr. Rabinowitz: Good afternoon, everybody. Well, I'm sorry to say that we came here this morning wishing to open up the negotiations in the joint delegation and the two tracks. And we came with some further ideas that could enhance the process and bring us to the table. And I think that we were quite close, and had the ground rules, so diligently negotiated by Secretary Baker before Madrid, and embodied in the invitation to the process, been respected, we would have been by now at the table.

The problem was more of a symbolic nature, but symbols that transcend the invitation, the ground rules, and unfortunately our further ideas were not accepted.

It is a pity, but nevertheless we will not waste our time neither today nor in the eight days that we've been here. Today we did reach understanding and we have been right there in front of their very eyes, for 24 years as the people under occupation, and with our leadership.

When the peace process started we accepted unfair and unjust conditions in order to facilitate this process and to do everything possible to get it going. And as a demonstration of our genuine and sincere commitment to peace, we came, as you know, as a people's delegation, with very unjust and unfair conditions and constraints, and we did everything possible to get the Israelis to engage with us and to negotiate directly on the basis of the letter of invitation, on the terms of reference as agreed upon, for the whole process.

And now that we are here, ready, willing and able, with a full delegation, with ready proposals, with a prepared agenda, with models that can be worked out, the Israelis have not accepted to negotiate with us.

It is very clear that we came here with a mandate from our people and our political leadership to negotiate, and it is very clear that the Israelis

the Israeli and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegations, had the opportunity to meet with each other to get this personal touch which is so vital for the success of any human contact, in particular sensitive negotiations, and to hear about the concerns of the other side. We of course shared our views on different things. And I think that this is important by itself.

So this is not the end of the world, it's the beginning. And we hope that the process will continue — in fact, we're sure it will continue — it has to continue for the sake of our region, countries...

We talked to the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Of course they are the two tracks. This is a process that was based on a very, very difficult long negotiation by Secretary Baker that produced an invitation, which included compromises on everybody's part, including on our part.

I assume, on our friends' part. The Jordanian-Palestinian delegation notion does not mean that the two tracks lose their meaning. The track that will deal with the interim self-government arrangements concerning the Palestinians in the territories is a track in which our problems will be hampered out. And that is where they will express their views and we will express our views, and they could do it also when needed in the joint delegation.

We have no disrespect for our friends there. It is not a question of respecting, it's a question of negotiating. I think our friends will testify to that here — in the most respectful and reasonable way that people who meet and negotiate can use. The negotiations are based on ground rules. These have to be respected. We regret that trying to transcend them into symbols, which aren't necessary, in fact prevented the negotiation from taking off — but we do not despair.

We do not ask the Jordanians to negotiate instead of the Palestinians, the Jordanians will negotiate in the Jordanian-Israeli track, hopefully bring us all to a treaty of peace with Jordan. There will be Palestinians that will join them in their track.

The Palestinians will negotiate the interim self-government arrangements jointly with Jordanians. And the process will go on.

And of course there are some common issues that may be, as necessary, negotiated in the joint delegation. That is all. We have no other agenda, ground rule, other than that.

Dr. Hassan Ashrawi: Thank you. Good afternoon.

For 24 years we have been listening to the refrain that the Israelis are looking for Palestinians to negotiate with and we have been right there in front of their very eyes, for 24 years as the people under occupation, and with our leadership.

When the peace process started we accepted unfair and unjust conditions in order to facilitate this process and to do everything possible to get it going. And as a demonstration of our genuine and sincere commitment to peace, we came, as you know, as a people's delegation, with very unjust and unfair conditions and constraints, and we did everything possible to get the Israelis to engage with us and to negotiate directly on the basis of the letter of invitation, on the terms of reference as agreed upon, for the whole process.

And now that we are here, ready, willing and able, with a full delegation, with ready proposals, with a prepared agenda, with models that can be worked out, the Israelis have not accepted to negotiate with us.

It is very clear that we came here with a mandate from our people and our political leadership to negotiate, and it is very clear that the Israelis

came here without a mandate to negotiate. Those of you who heard Shamir's statements Saturday talking about the fact that the delegation does not have the mandate to discuss interim self-government arrangements and that this will be discussed only in the cabinet before, and those of you who have read Shamir's statements about delaying and not rushing into things would place all these delays in context.

We came here on the 4th and the Israelis did not. We were willing to wait. We accepted the affront. And we said that regardless of all these delaying tactics, we're not going to give Israel the excuse to sabotage this process.

We have given them numerous proposals, suggestions, compromise solutions and even short-cuts, and they have rejected each and every single one of them.

Today we have been told that they are leaving. We haven't even told officially, the corridor, that they're leaving this evening. So it's unusual but it's a strange coincidence that they come late to the assigned meeting or beginning of negotiations and decide unilaterally to leave early.

I would like to announce very frankly and openly that the Palestinian delegation is here is willing to stay, is willing to engage the Israelis, is willing to try everything possible to start these negotiations going, to achieve genuine peace.

We were willing to remain even through the night, although I promised my daughters I would be home for Christmas, and we made our willingness and our positive intention clear not just to the Israelis but to the American sponsors and hosts. And unfortunately, we were surprised by a statement that the Israelis are leaving tonight.

Today's meeting, we offered them another compromise solution. We offered to again meet bilaterally, although the letter of invitation talks about only bilateral negotiations, and the form of the three heads of delegation. And even if they wanted, we offered to meet as three delegations together bilaterally for a limited period with a restricted agenda, just to get going, to overcome this or that impasse, and they refused. We said that the three delegations will meet or the three sides will meet with the consent of the three, and they refused. They said only one has the right to call for a meeting of the three.

So it seems that every single concession, every single positive move, every single attempt to reach out and to get these negotiations going has been rejected very clearly, and to us it has become very clear that Mr. Shamir has been telling the truth, surprisingly, that when he said that they do not have the mandate to discuss anything of substance, when he said that they're here to discuss technicalities or to delay us and to get us embroiled in technicalities and procedural and not to start substantive negotiations.

It seems to us also that they came here to add scores with the U.S. and not to engage in negotiations with the Palestinians.

They came to assert once again the asymmetry of power, to impose the mentality of the occupied on the occupied here, to dictate to the Palestinians, to the sponsors, and to the rest of their delegation, how things should be according to Israeli decisions, and not according to the terms of reference and agreements.

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Syria, Lebanon make little progress

(Continued from page 1)

in Washington and "they did not refuse completely the idea of coming back to Washington, which is something good."

Israel wants the next round to move to the Middle East, feeling that sessions held in Israel would signify Arab recognition of the Jewish state. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's spokesman, Ebad Gol, said Wednesday that "it's a possibility" the talks could convene again in Washington, but their position in Wednesday's talks remained that the venue should change.

Mr. Arafat, asked about the venue, said, "They did not today refuse completely the idea of coming back to Washington, which is something good... because we insist on staying here, to reach some results, as long as it is needed."

Of the sets of talks, perhaps the difficult has been the one with Syria.

"No progress at all yet," Syrian delegate Bushra Kanafani said. The two sides have become bogged down on the question of sequence. The Syrians are demanding the unconditional return of the Golan Heights while Israel wants the initial phase of the talks to focus on security guarantees.

It is "very clear that the Israeli dictionary does not have the word 'withdrawal,'" Ms. Kanafani said. The Israelis, meanwhile, complained about Syria's vote against Monday's U.N. General Assem-

bly repeal of a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. They contended the move was proof that Syria still does not recognize the right of Jews to live in Israel.

We feel that all these tricks and ploys and games do not do justice to the Israeli people, and we would like to address the Israeli people directly, and appeal to them to make their voice heard and to tell their government and their policymakers that they will not put up with all these games and ploys any more, that they do want peace, and they do want to negotiate with the Palestinians directly, and they do want to put an end to a very bitter history of conflict and violence in our region.

And we ask the Israeli people also to reach out to us the way we have been trying all these years to reach out to them. And unfortunately the barriers are being put up by officials, and I think between the two peoples there is a genuine impulse, a genuine momentum for peace.

Unfortunately, this has not been reflected by the official Israeli attitude.

We came committed to the terms of reference, and to the assurances of the co-sponsors. We assumed, we understood, we believed, that the sponsors were acting in good faith, and with the predisposition and the political will to make this process succeed. Unfortunately, we find them becoming more and more self-effacing, more and more passive.

We were assured that this asymmetry would be redressed once the process starts, but this hasn't been redressed. And we need an active and even-handed intervention, third party intervention, in order to get the process going.

Because what we have been saying all along has just been demonstrated as the truth, an accurate description. Left to our own devices, the Palestinian people as a people under occupation, and the Israelis, as an occupying power, the Israeli government, will not be able to make peace.

We also hoped that the Israelis would accept a reference to the sponsors, to the Americans, to be able to go up and say, all right, we do have a stalemate or a deadlock. We have tried everything possible today, and the response was that, as far as they're concerned, there are no sponsors.

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U.S. and U.N. role in media focus

(Continued from page 1)

helping Israel and Arab states deal with such multilateral issues as economic development and water."

"A Philadelphia Inquirer editorial said that the U.N. had 'redeemed itself,'" but added that the repeal should "encourage Israel's government to rethink its reluctance to trade land for peace, and its encouragement of new settlements in occupied areas even as peace talks are getting off the ground."

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Jordan Times

Cabinet-Islamist compromise

(Continued from page 1)

clearly aiming at bringing the government down and there seemed to be room for compromise.

Ikhwan officials had repeatedly indicated that the position did not represent an ultimatum. They revealed that the Ikhwan were actually expecting Mr. Masri not to win a vote of confidence in the first place, as they assumed that the Constitution Bloc would withhold its confidence in the Masri government.

But it seems that the Constitution Bloc changed its mind at the last moment. They (Constitution Bloc) were influenced not to do so," said a Brotherhood official implying that the Constitution Bloc granted Mr. Masri the vote of confidence to please the Royal Court.

Even though the Constitution Bloc and Ikhwan differed on the most fundamental issues, especially the peace process, they appeared to meet in their opposition to Mr. Masri and resistance to any fundamental changes that could undermine their gains and influence.

Brotherhood officials admit that Mr. Masri's alliance with the left was a source of concern to them but insist that it was not a major reason for opposing his cabinet.

"If you want to talk in terms of percentages our opposition to Mr. Masri's cabinet was 99 percent based on our rejection of the peace talks and 1 percent due to what (Mr. Masri's leftist connection)," Deputy Hameed Mansour told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

The Ikhwan's recent vote in the Parliament provides credence to Mr. Mansour's argument. However, the fact that the Ikhwan have dropped their sharp tone against the government and committed any direct accusations against the cabinet of Sharif Zeid leaves room for doubt that other factors, in addition to the peace process, were behind their fierce resistance to Mr. Masri.

Moreover, the Ikhwan's "coop-

eration" with the Constitution Bloc seems to continue as was indicated by the withdrawal of the bloc's candidate to the speakership of the Parliament in favour of the Ikhwan's.

Well informed political observers believe that the Constitution Bloc played a crucial role in bringing about a tacit understanding between the government and the Ikhwan. According to this tacit understanding the government respects and recognises the role of the Ikhwan while the latter tones down opposition and does not take steps that can be viewed as challenging to the regime itself.

Although the Ikhwan have always steered away from a confrontation with the regime, their sharp attacks in their press, against the peace process, was viewed by officials and the security as exceeding the limits, prompting the cancellation of their daily (Al Rabat) last October.

The Ikhwan, however, were firm in their speech in the Parliament last week. They categorically rejected the peace process and called for the Islamisation of the system.

But it seems that, at least for the near future, the new government has succeeded in drawing the line for the Brotherhood. At the same time, the Ikhwan's respect, according to a senior Ikhwan official, to Sharif Zeid and concern not to threaten state security will contribute to diffusing the tensions.

Moreover, the Ikhwan have traditionally avoided any confrontation that can seriously jeopardise their relationship with the palace and they appear to be holding to this line.

However, if the peace process continued without progress, the Ikhwan will be torn between pressure from "radicalised" grassroots supporters and the movement's leaders' desire to remain a loyalist opposition.

Ikhwan officials have repeatedly maintained that the movement will not seek to undermine the country's stability, threaten its security or derail the democratisation process.

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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK 17.12.91	TEL AVIV 18.12.91
Sterling Pound	1.8270	1.8275
Deutsche Mark	1.5715	1.5715
Swiss Franc	1.3905	1.3905
French Franc	5.3655	5.3655
Japanese Yen	126.28	126.28
European Currency Unit	1.2545	1.2545

1 USD Per 100
European Opening at 8.00 a.m. GMT

European Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	4.75	4.37	4.37	4.45
Sterling Pound	10.68	10.56	10.57	10.37
Deutsche Mark	9.50	9.43	9.43	9.37
Swiss Franc	8.15	8.10	8.06	7.87
French Franc	9.68	9.75	9.65	9.56
Japanese Yen	6.31	6.00	5.81	5.50
European Currency Unit	10.37	10.31	10.25	10.26

Interest rate bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm
Gold	357.05	6.85	Silver	3.66	2.263

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 18.12.91

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.677	0.681
Sterling Pound	1.2359	1.2451
Deutsche Mark	0.4316	0.4358
Swiss Franc	0.4681	0.4905
French Franc	0.1264	0.1276
Japanese Yen	0.5285	0.5311
Dutch Guilder	0.3830	0.3839
Swedish Krona	0.1182	0.1188
Italian Lira	0.0571	0.0574
Belgian Franc	0.02077	0.02107

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7720	1.7760
Lebanese Lira	0.0770	0.0775
Saudi Riyal	0.1507	0.1613
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1640	0.1649
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2160
Omani Riyal	1.7350	1.7460
UAE Dirham	0.1640	0.1649
Greek Drachma	0.5755	0.5770
Cypriot Pound	1.5100	1.5210

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	16.12.91	Close	17.12.91	Close
All-Share	129.01		129.14	
Banking Sector	106.73		106.71	
Insurance Sector	128.08		127.81	
Industry Sector	162.55		162.60	
Services Sector	142.37		143.46	

December 31, 1990 - 1991

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One Sterling	1.8280/90	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1452/57	Canadian dollar
	1.5675/85	Deutsche mark
	1.7680/90	Dutch guilder
	1.3862/72	Swiss franc
	32.25/29	Belgian franc
	5.3500/50	French franc
	1184/1185	Italian lire
	138.20/24	Japanese yen
	5.7230/80	Swedish crown
	6.1650/1700	Norwegian crown
	6.0990/1040	Danish crown
One ounce of gold	357.40/358.10	U.S. dollars

Israel hopes to better economy to provide jobs to immigrants

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel, facing alarming levels of unemployment among Soviet immigrants, is trying to shape the economy to produce the growth and jobs needed to keep attracting new-comers.

The government's attempt to accelerate a decline in interest rates Sunday was followed Monday by a new system of setting the shekel exchange rate to induce a gradual devaluation intended to provide discipline for Israel's lagging export industries.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government, which faces an election next year, is coming under pressure to act as unemployment rises and Soviet immigration slows.

He will also face the challenge after the U.S. Congress reconvenes in January of convincing Americans that Israel will have enough economic growth to repay the \$10 billion in loans that Israel wants Washington to guarantee.

The two steps this week were related.

Israel's central bank had ruthlessly pushed up interest rates from September in an effort to shore up the shekel, which had come under intense pressure

from Israelis buying dollars in expectation of a devaluation.

The prime rate at major banks rose from 14.6 per cent in September to a peak of 25 per cent in mid-November. With pressure on the shekel easing, interest rates began to slide.

The central bank gave that process of spurring the economy an extra push Sunday, injecting more liquidity into the system. Bank prime rates dropped from 21 per cent to 18.6 per cent.

The lack of pressure on the shekel allowed the authorities to follow the interest rate changes with a new system of setting exchange rates.

Under the old system the median rate of the shekel against a basket of currencies was set periodically, usually changing about every six months. As the expected change approached, speculation against the shekel mounted.

"It became the national lottery," Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, who took over this year as head of the central bank after directing research for the International Monetary Fund, told a Monday night news conference.

Starting Tuesday the median

rate of the shekel against a basket of currencies was lowered by three per cent — with Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai saying it would fall an additional nine per cent by the end of 1992.

"What is important here is that we now, at the beginning of the year, are sending a clear signal of what the exchange rate policy is and we are saying to exporters you can plan for the long term," Mr. Frenkel said Tuesday.

Exporters complained that devaluation will still be less than inflation, which continues to run at nearly 20 per cent a year. However, recent months have shown improvement and Frenkel, who in recent months proved his opposition to large devaluations, set curbing Israel's endemic inflation as a priority.

"There will be no more devaluation and then the interest rates will start going down in a significant way," Mr. Frenkel said. "That is exactly what the economy needs."

Exports are crucial to the economy, which has seen some growth this year in other areas despite a sharp increase in the labour force because of immigration.

While Mr. Modai believes

Israel must attain 12 per cent annual increases in exports to cover the costs of integrating Soviet immigrants, exports this year are forecast to fall 2.5 per cent.

Unemployment, which stood at a 20-year high of 10 per cent in 1990, has averaged 10.4 per cent this year. It is forecast to hit 14 per cent in two years.

According to figures this week from the Central Bureau of Statistics, only 68,000 Soviet immigrants since late 1989 have found jobs. That leaves 44,000 listed as unemployed and thousands more on language and other training programmes.

Immigration that was hovering around the 30,000 per month mark a year ago sank to a low of 8,000 in November. Only deteriorating conditions in the Soviet Union rather than improvements in Israel keep immigration officials optimistic.

The shekel exchange rate against a basket of currencies barely moved, drifting from 2.5647 shekels to 2.5635 shekels. The stock market showed more enthusiasm, racing up five per cent Monday before falling back 1.17 per cent Tuesday.

Saudi economic boom confounds many expectations

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Saudi Arabia's economy is booming with state firms and private investors alike riding a wave of business confidence that has swept the kingdom since the end of the Gulf war.

State-owned firms like Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), the kingdom's petrochemical giant, are borrowing billions of dollars to finance ambitious expansion projects.

Private investors, discouraged by economic downturns elsewhere, are repatriating funds sent abroad after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and plan to launch new ventures at home.

"At a time when there is a recession in the United States and a slowdown elsewhere things look better at home," Henry Azam, senior economist at National Commercial Bank said.

"It's a much safer place to do business now than before and the prospects ahead look good — there is much more confidence and long-term plans can be implemented," he pointed out.

Most of the kingdom's banks are making solid if not record profits. Share prices on Riyadh's

computer exchange have risen by an average of 70 per cent since the start of 1991.

Economists say the boom, which confounded many expectations, will almost certainly continue provided oil prices — the main barometer of the kingdom's economy — remain strong next year.

Riyadh has already paid off most of an estimated \$50 billion to \$65 billion in Gulf crisis costs and is unlikely to cut government spending — which typically accounts for about a third of total economic activity — in 1992.

Independent economists say oil export revenues reached \$45 billion in 1991 and are projected at \$43.6 billion in 1992, assuming an average price of \$18-per barrel and production of eight million barrels per day (b/d).

Saudi Arabia is currently producing 8.5 million b/d and has signalled it will not cut output sharply in 1992.

Trade is booming in the western port city of Jeddah while military construction projects have begun in central areas.

State-owned oil firm Saudi Aramco, the main source of gov-

ernment revenues, is forging ahead with a multi-billion dollar expansion to take capacity to 10 million b/d.

SABIC plans to borrow about \$2 billion from domestic banks in 1992 to boost its petrochemical and fertilizer production to 20 million tonnes from 13 million.

Probably most important of all, the private sector is taking a more active role in the economy than ever before. Economists say the fact that Saudi Arabia emerged from its first modern war virtually unscathed has boosted public confidence.

The clipping of Iraq's military power and closer post-crisis ties between non-Arab Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbours have made the region seem safer than ever before.

Economists say total deposits in 11 of the kingdom's banks rose by 27 per cent during the first nine months of 1991.

Anwar Ahmed, vice-president for the Riyadh-based Consulting Centre for Finance and Investment, said wealthy investors were beginning to pool their resources.

"The private sector is making the most of opportunities available. In the past people used to act on their own but now we see a very healthy trend for groups of investors to get together to channel their energies," he said.

Mr. Ahmed said several new firms had been set up in the past few months, including the Jeddah-based Saudi Industrial

Company, which will explore new opportunities in ceramics, food, pharmaceutical and downstream petrochemical industries.

Three new share floatations this year — the first in Saudi Arabia since 1989 — were heavily oversubscribed and a similar response is expected to others scheduled for the coming months.

The Saudi official index for 55 listed companies rose to a record 184.39 points in November, up from 97.55 at the beginning of the year, and has remained close to that level ever since.

Bankers say weekly issues of government treasury bills, launched last month to tap excess liquidity and help finance Riyadh's budget deficit, have been heavily oversubscribed.

"They predict that Saudi Arabia," which borrowed \$7 billion from foreign and domestic banks in its first syndicated credits this year, would not need to borrow again in 1992.

A budget deficit which swelled to \$16 billion in 1990 from a projected \$6.6 billion, was likely to shrink in 1992.

Riyadh postponed announcing a 1991 budget last year due to difficulties in projecting expenditure and oil revenues but it is expected to unveil its 1992 spending plans on Dec. 31.

"There may be long-term red ink as far as the budget is concerned but I'm bullish on the real economy — it's booming," one Western economist said.

Iran says gas find in Gulf worth \$200b

NICOSIA (R) — Iran announced Tuesday it has tapped into the world's largest gas field, finding reserves worth \$200 billion where its Gulf waters meet Qatar's.

It said its section, called the South Pars Field, holds 100 trillion cubic feet (2.8 trillion cubic metres) of gas, plus gas liquids and oil.

The gas lies beneath shallow waters in the Gulf. Qatar, which calls the reservoir the North Field, began producing in August. Reserves on the Qatari side are estimated at 500 trillion cubic feet (14 trillion cubic metres).

Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh, quoted by the Iranian news agency IRNA, said the field was "the largest ever discovery of its kind in history."

He said the reservoir also held 2.5 billion to 3.0 billion barrels of gas liquids.

"While drilling, oil layers were found at a depth of 1,200 to 1,400 metres the capacity and vastness of which are yet to be determined. However, it is remarkable," Mr. Aqazadeh said.

He put the value of the recoverable gas at \$200 billion, Tehran Radio said.

Iran has the world's second largest gas reserves after the Soviet Union.

Gulf oil industry sources said in September that the Italian firm Tecnologie Pregevoli e Lavori (TPL) had started drilling three appraisal wells into the field in July on a \$37 million contract.

Mr. Aqazadeh said Iran was talking with several unnamed foreign firms on developing the South Pars Field.

Tehran hoped to secure financing by advance sale of part of gas liquids from the project, the radio quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, Iran said it had no plans to give up state control over oil production and refining though it is promoting private investment in the petrochemical industry.

Mr. Aqazadeh, quoted by IRNA, denied news reports in Iran that a government-affiliated foundation was nearing agreement with his ministry to build an oil refinery in southern Iran.

Iran, second biggest exporter in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), earns more than 90 per cent of its hard currency from crude oil sales. Its oil industry was nationalised in 1951.

Mr. Aqazadeh, who was speak-

ing to reporters Tuesday, said oil and gas reserves were part of Iran's public wealth according to the constitution and the edict of late supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"Therefore... the activities of the National Iranian Oil Company in such fields as exploration, production and sale are the duties of the government and cannot be ceded," he said, adding that the private sector could invest only in downstream industries such as petrochemicals.

The minister said earlier this month investors were spending up to \$872 million to build the first nine petrochemical project his ministry had authorised for the private sector.

Mr. Aqazadeh told reporters he expected demand for OPEC oil to rise in the next decade. The 13-member group produces about 40 per cent of the world's total oil.

"There is a feeling that oil production will drop in non-OPEC countries while their domestic consumption will rise. On the other hand, economic growth around the world, especially in the Third World, would in turn increase the demand for oil," IRNA quoted him as saying.

"However, despite all current efforts to substitute other sources of energy for oil it is unlikely that oil prices will be affected by the end of 1990s," Mr. Aqazadeh added.

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Baker finds resistance to Yeltsin in republics

Gorbachev bows to inevitable, accepts commonwealth—Yeltsin

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has bowed to the inevitable and accepted that his vision of the Soviet Union must give way to the new commonwealth by the New Year.

Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, riding high as the most prominent leader of the new grouping, said he and the Kremlin leader met for one hour and 40 minutes and Mr. Gorbachev had shown "a definite change in position."

The red Soviet flag would be lowered from over the Kremlin on New Year's Eve, Mr. Yeltsin's press secretary Pavel Voshchanov said.

Mr. Gorbachev wished the commonwealth success and pledged not to put any obstacles in its way," Mr. Yeltsin told the Russian Information Agency.

Mr. Yeltsin predicted that all existing Soviet structures would be dissolved by the end of the year.

"From the beginning of January, we can start living in a qualitatively new situation, without the former union," Mr. Yeltsin told the agency.

Mr. Gorbachev has opposed the commonwealth since its inception on Dec. 8 by the country's three big Slav republics — Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia.

Its membership is expected to leap to nine this weekend after a meeting in the Kazakh capital, Alma-Ata. Mr. Gorbachev may attend the meeting or at least send his proposals with a representative.

The Soviet president, clinging to power despite intense pressure to resign, tried to use his various levers of power to counter it. But his power bases all fell away.

The republics withdrew their members from the national parliament, rendering it redundant.

Mr. Yeltsin co-opted Mr. Gorbachev's defence minister on to his negotiating team in talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. This made Mr. Gorbachev commander-in-chief of the armed forces in name only.

The commonwealth proposals leave Mr. Gorbachev without a place as central authority disappears in what is no longer a country but rather a community of states.

In a further indication of the loose relationship in the new grouping, to be renamed the Commonwealth of Euro-Asian States, Russia officially recognised the independence of both Kazakhstan and Armenia.

TASS news agency quoted Mr. Gorbachev as saying he would accept the commonwealth, although he still believed the dismemberment of the Soviet Union would plunge the country further into crisis.

"If Supreme Soviets (republican parliaments) speak in favour of the commonwealth of independent states, I will respect that decision," TASS quoted him as saying.

Russia under Boris Yeltsin has assumed control of more and more sectors of political and economic activity since last August's coup that removed Mr. Gorbachev for three days.

"(U.S. Secretary of State James) Baker saw that the Russian structures are where the real power lies and can also be a stabilising factor," said commentator Nikolai Svanidze of Russian television.

"He also saw that there was no place for Mr. Gorbachev though

the West would like one to be found. The world community has barely got used to the collapse of the Soviet Union and cannot yet begin to guess what the Commonwealth means."

Meanwhile, Mr. Baker arrived Wednesday in the capital of Byelorussia amid questions over how the new commonwealth will control the old Soviet Union's nuclear arms.

Mr. Baker was to meet Byelorussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich before flying to Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev told Mr. Baker that his republic, the second-largest, will allow central control of its nuclear weaponry but won't disarm unless Russia also does so.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin — who did not invite Mr. Nazarbayev to the original Dec. 8 meeting that founded a commonwealth among the Slavic republics — has said that he wants all nuclear weapons to be based in Russia and administered by a central authority.

Mr. Nazarbayev said he hopes leaders of the four nuclear republics will sign a treaty providing for that centralised control "in one site."

He also said the arsenals, wherever they are based in the meantime, would be monitored and the republics would agree not to spread nuclear weapons or technology to other countries.

Mr. Baker said he was reassured by the Kazakh leader's approach to the problem. Mr. Baker also indicated he was asking the leaders of the nuclear republics not to aim them at the United States.

Mr. Nazarbayev, speaking with reporters after a three-hour meet-

ing with Mr. Baker, balked at Mr. Yeltsin's attempts to put Russia in the U.N. Security Council seat held by the Soviet Union.

He said Russia's bid for the seat must be studied by the leaders of the nine Soviet republics expected to meet Saturday in the Kazakhstan capital of Alma-Ata to recognise the new commonwealth.

The apparent rift could reflect resistance by the five Asian republics to Mr. Yeltsin's assertion of authority over the commonwealth.

Mr. Yeltsin did not invite Mr. Nazarbayev to the original Dec. 8 meeting that founded a commonwealth among the Slavic republics. Mr. Nazarbayev expressed some displeasure at the perceived slight, and will be welcomed into the commonwealth retroactively as a founding member.

In Ukraine, Baker also will be confronted by demands that the United States recognise Ukraine's Dec. 1 independence referendum.

The United States has conditioned its recognition of the Ukraine on several issues, including firm assurances of control of nuclear weapons. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk has said his republic must hold onto the nuclear arms on its territory until they are dismantled.

Saturday's commonwealth meeting is expected to be attended by the three Slavic republics, plus Armenia and the five Asian republics: Uzbekistan, Kirgizia, Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan and Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan is second in size only to Russia in the old Soviet Union and has rich oil reserves.

S. Korea 'is free of' nuclear weapons

SEOUL (R) — President Roh Tae-Woo declared Wednesday that South Korea was free of nuclear weapons and urged North Korea to join in making the peninsula a nuclear-free zone.

"As I speak, there do not exist any nuclear weapons whatsoever anywhere in the Republic of Korea," Mr. Roh said in a televised speech.

Mr. Roh's declaration confirmed that the United States had removed its nuclear weapons from the South. It gave his administration strong leverage in its campaign to force Pyongyang to renounce its suspected nuclear arms development.

The North, which maintains its nuclear plants are for peaceful purposes, says it would allow outside inspections if Washington begin withdrawing its nuclear arms from the South.

Seoul and its allies believe North Korea's nuclear programme, centred at Yongbyon north of Pyongyang, aims to build a bomb. U.S. officials have called it the gravest threat to regional security.

Mr. Roh said there was "no reason or excuse" for North Korea to develop nuclear arms or refuse inspections now that the South had declared itself nuclear-free.

"North Korea must forthwith conclude and ratify a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), shut down all nuclear processing and enrichment facilities, and submit unconditionally to international inspection," Mr. Roh said.

The presidential speech did not directly mention the issue of U.S. nuclear weapons. But a senior government official said the statement meant such weapons had already been removed.

About 39,000 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, still technically at war with the North, one of the world's last Stalinist states. Washington neither confirms nor denies the presence of its nuclear arms overseas.

In September, President George Bush said the United States would eliminate its tactical weapons deployed worldwide. U.S. newspaper reports have said this included about 100 nuclear weapons stored at Kunsan Air Base south of Seoul.

The two Koreas, which fought a war from 1950 to 1953, last week signed a non-aggression pact hailed as the most significant step towards ending decades of enmity.

The document, signed in Seoul during a meeting of the Korean premiers, bars slander and subversion, provides early warning mechanisms to prevent an accidental outbreak of war and calls for cross-border exchanges of peoples, information, broadcasts and mail as well as economic cooperation.

Mr. Roh said the accord opened a new era of reconciliation and cooperation but the nuclear issue must be settled as soon as possible to ensure peace and on the peninsula, divided since 1945.

Carrington discusses Yugoslavia's future

BELGRADE (R) — European Community (EC) mediator Lord Carrington began a peace mission Wednesday to discuss the future shape of Yugoslavia and renew efforts to end the fighting.

Lord Carrington, who heads the Hague conference on the Yugoslav crisis, was first talking to Croatian and Slovenian leaders in the Austrian city of Graz and was to fly on to Belgrade later to meet Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Slovenian President Milan Kucan made clear before the Graz meeting that even if some kind of future association between the six Yugoslav republics were discussed, it would not alter Slovenia's stand.

"Slovenia is for complete independence and for further contacts based on common interests," he told reporters in the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana.

He added that he saw little chance of close association. "I am sure that after the war there will be no mutual trust whatsoever for such an alliance of republics to be founded."

Tuesday's conditional EC agreement to recognise the independence of Croatia and Slovenia has renewed international efforts to bring peace to Croatia, where thousands have died in almost six months of fighting between Croats and Serbs backed by the Serb-led federal army.

Croatia's 600,000-strong Serbian minority rebelled when Croatia announced in June that it was leaving the federation, and since then 14 ceasefires, several of them negotiated by Lord Carrington, have rapidly broken down.

Besides Lord Carrington, an advance party of United Nations observers is also due in Belgrade to make a new assessment of whether the time is right to send in thousands of U.N. peace-keeping troops.

Serbian Foreign Minister Vladimir Jovanovic left for Cairo for the talks with Boutros Ghali, who takes over as U.N. secretary-general in less than two weeks.

Before leaving he said Mr. Ghali wanted first-hand information on Serbia's stand, and he would discuss with him the problems involved in sending a U.N. force to Yugoslavia.

Although Serbia had previously denounced moves towards international recognition of Croatia and Slovenia as attempts to dismember Yugoslavia, its reaction to Tuesday's EC decision was surprisingly muted.

"It is obviously not the way to help Yugoslavia," said Mr. Jovanovic, but added that it was too early to give a detailed assessment of what it meant.

In a compromise with Germany's aim of recognising the two republics immediately, the 12 EC states decided they would all do so on Jan. 15 provided Croatia and Slovenia met conditions on standards of democracy, human rights and protection of minorities.

Yugoslavia's collective presidency, now reduced to Serbia and its allies, also issued a low-key statement referring to Yugoslavia as a recognised international entity, all of whose constituents should decide its future.

In line with this measured response, Tuesday night and Wednesday morning brought a continuation but no noticeable upsurge in the fighting in Croatia.

Croatian radio referred to heavy artillery fire in the area of Valpovo and a renewed attack on Croat-held Osijek, both of them in eastern Croatia close to Serbia.

There was firing throughout the night near the southern coastal town of Zadar, especially around the Serb-held Zemunik Air Base, but outbreaks in other areas were sporadic, it added.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency reported a Croatian attack in a village on its eastern border with Serbia and overnight firing around Nova Gradiska, midway between Belgrade and Zagreb. Neither side spoke of fresh casualties and none of the reports could be confirmed.

Commonwealth pledges support for S. Africa talks

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — Commonwealth observers Wednesday pledged support for South African reform talks this weekend aimed at replacing white minority rule with democracy.

"Our presence here demonstrates the Commonwealth's strong support for the negotiating process and its readiness to assist in whatever ways it might be helpful," Commonwealth leader and former Zimbabwean President Canaan Banana said on arrival at Johannesburg airport.

He said the Convention for a Democratic South Africa bringing together 20 rival South African black and white organisations this weekend would "set out on a new and peaceful path towards the realisation of a democratic, non-racial society."

President F.W. de Klerk's gov-

ernment, softening decades of hostility to international bodies which opposed apartheid, has invited groups such as the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement to observe the talks.

A steering committee of the rival groups, including Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party and the government, met Wednesday to try to decide what status to accord the convention's decisions and draft a statement of intent.

President F.W. de Klerk has rejected a demand by Mandela that the talks' decisions have legal force, arguing that this would usurp the role of parliament and be tantamount to turning the convention into an executive arm of government.

Mr. Bush was the only Republican to qualify for South Dakota's primary, state party officials said Monday. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Duke failed to gain enough support at meetings to select delegations, they explained.

Mr. Buchanan said state officials misled him about the requirements to get on the ballot. He said he had appealed vainly to Mr. Yutterm to intervene on his behalf or to get Mr. Bush to do so.

"This is not George Bush's style" to keep anyone off the ballot, Mr. Buchanan said. "I think this is wrong," he said, also referring to the party's decision not to share lists of contributors or its research with him.

"We're not going to sit still for it," Mr. Buchanan said. He did not say what he might do to bring party leaders around to his way of thinking.

Mr. Buchanan said the United States should immediately recognise Russia and Ukraine as free and independent states "instead of being 37th in line — as we were in recognising the Republic of Lithuania."

"What is the president waiting for?" Mr. Buchanan asked.

He also proposed that foreign governments be required to pay the U.S. treasury a \$1 million fee to register lobbyists to represent them in Washington. He asserted that Washington was full or representatives of foreign governments, particularly of Japan.

U.N. force meets Khmer Rouge in rebel territory

PHNOM PENH (R) — U.N. peacekeepers flew into Cambodian guerrilla-held territory from the government side for the first time Wednesday to meet senior officials of the radical Khmer Rouge, the U.N. mission said Wednesday.

However, a Cambodian general accused the Khmer Rouge of violating the ceasefire by attacking a government outpost in the northwest Sunday, killing three of his men and wounding four.

Major General Long Sopheap, commander of the Fourth Military Region, told reporters travelling with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans that 350 Khmer Rouge guerrillas raided Sre Moi in Sre Reap province.

General Sopheap said the attack was one of the worst violations of the fragile ceasefire, and took place only 30 kilometres from the Beantei Serei Temple that Mr. Evans visited Wednesday. Government troops drove the Khmer Rouge into nearby mountains, Gen. Sopheap said.

Mr. Evans, an architect of Cambodia's peace accord, left later after a three-day visit that included an excursion to the fabled 12th century temples of Angkor Wat near the frontier.

A French helicopter Wednesday took Ataul Karim, liaison chief for the U.N. Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), and his military chief French Brigadier Michel Loridon from the Western city of Battambang to the Khmer Rouge stronghold of Palin, 25 kilometres from the Thai border.

After meeting senior Khmer Rouge officials, Mr. Karim said the peace accord was "on track" and all factions were helping the U.N. peacekeepers in their task, UNAMIC said.

The Khmer Rouge are the strongest of the three guerrilla factions that signed the peace agreement with the Phnom Penh government in October to end 13 years of civil war.

Mr. Karim said the flight over two areas under rival control symbolised the progress made since the accord was signed.

UNAMIC did not say which Khmer Rouge leaders Mr. Karim met before returning to Battambang.

U.N. sources said permanent U.N. military liaison officers would be stationed in the zone held by the three former guerrilla allies — the Khmer Rouge, the KPNLF (Khmer People's National Liberation Front) and forces loyal to Prince Norodom Sihanouk — before Christmas.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Yeltsin to visit Italy

ROME (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, on his first overseas visit since pronouncing the Soviet Union extinct, flies to Italy Thursday to woo one of the defunct state's biggest trading partners. His priorities will be to unlock official credits and attract private investment, Italian officials said. "He will be coming to explain what is happening in the Soviet Union and how to adapt our joint agreements to the new situation," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. When the commonwealth was formed, Mr. Yeltsin said the Soviet Union had ceased to exist as a legal and political entity. He has insisted on coming to Italy despite a hectic schedule, and officials say the visit reflects the importance to Russia of good relations with Moscow's second-biggest Western investor and trading partner after Germany. Yeltsin is expected to press Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti to unblock a \$6 billion credit line to the Soviet Union, frozen last month pending clarification of whether the republics would agree to honour Soviet obligations.

Pentagon seeks funds for missile defence

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speeding up construction of a U.S. missile defence system, as ordered last month by Congress, will add about \$2 billion to the cost over the next four or five years, a senior Pentagon official said. Henry Cooper, director of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) organisation in charge of missile defence, told reporters he welcomed the missile defence act of 1991 as a "real landmark" in the turbulent history of ballistic missile defence. "It's the first mandate that we've ever gotten from the Congress to seriously undertake development and deployment of defences for the American people," Mr. Cooper said. In order to have an initial missile defence system ready by 1996, as called for in the Missile Defence Act, the Pentagon will have to accelerate its development plan. That will add about 10 per cent a year to the SDI budget, Mr. Cooper said.

Kashmiri groups vow to fight on

ISLAMABAD (R) — Seven Pakistan-based Kashmiri groups vowed Wednesday to fight for the complete independence of Kashmir rather than joining India or Pakistan who now rule the divided Himalayan region. The main Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and six other groups said in a joint declaration the Muslim revolt in the two-thirds of the region ruled by India was a "war for complete independence of Jammu and Kashmir." Pakistan controls the remaining third of the region. The two countries have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir since the sub-continent won independence from Britain in 1947. The JKLF has spearheaded the two-year-old revolt in which at least 5,000 people have been killed in clashes between the militants and Indian security forces. The declaration issued at a news conference follows JKLF complaints over the past several months that Islamabad was helping only those groups which want Kashmir to join Pakistan. The groups joining the JKLF in the declaration are Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front, Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front, Kashmir Freedom Movement, Tehrik Islami Jamhooria Kashmir, Al-Mujahideen Fil-Islam and Quami Tehrik Azadi Kashmir.

4 Russians die in shipping accident

GLASGOW (AP) — A North Atlantic storm killed four men Wednesday and injured 15 others aboard a Russian processing ship, the coast guard said. Clyde Coast Guard spokesman Phil White said a large wave crashed into the wheelhouse of the 80-metre ship, breaking the windows and killing two men instantly. A third man was found dead in the water, Mr. White said. A fourth man who was seriously injured in the accident died later at Atnagevill Hospital in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, a spokesman for Strathclyde Police said. It was not known if the man who died in the hospital had been in the wheelhouse when the wave hit the factory ship, Kartli. The captain and the chief officer were in the wheelhouse when the wave hit and were among the eight men and two women airlifted to Atnagevill hospital. Six other crew members were airlifted to a hospital in Kilmarnock, near Glasgow. The remaining 32 crew members were on board a naval tanker en route to Kilmarnock, Mr. White said. He said one man was suffering from hypothermia.

51 injured in U.S. train accident

PALATKA, Florida (AP) — A passenger train derailed and smashed through two houses, leaving train cars jackknifed across a street and sending 51 people to hospitals, authorities said.

The Silver Meteor was carrying about 170 passengers and a crew of 16 from New York City to Tampa when it derailed late Tuesday morning, authorities said. Among those hurt was a congressman's wife.

Six people with the most serious injuries were flown by helicopter to out-of-town hospitals, and 45 others were treated at the local Putnam Community Hospital.

Passenger Daniel Hunter of Winter Park was in a bathroom when the train derailed. "I was slammed back and forth against the walls. I felt like I was in a dryer," said Mr. Hunter.

Now domestic policy is White House priority

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the White House these days, domestic policy is in, foreign policy is out.

Foreign policy has been sent down the street to the State Department, a casualty of polls suggesting voters think President George Bush has been spending too much time on world affairs and not enough on the home front.

So Mr. Bush is flying 2,800 miles (4,500 kms) Wednesday — round-trip to Dallas — just to sign a domestic-policy transportation bill. It's a long trip, considering he could have signed it in the White House instead of at a road construction site in Texas.

The president has trumpeted the measure as capable of creating hundreds of thousands of new construction jobs, and White House strategists wanted to showcase the bill signing.

And the Washington Post, quoting unnamed congressional officials, reported Wednesday that the administration is seriously considering a one-time tax rebate of up to \$300 per taxpayer next year in an effort to spur the economy.

"People are hurting," has become a boilerplate phrase in almost every presidential speech these days.

And there has been a flurry of paperwork and photo opportunities at the White House to demonstrate that Mr. Bush is engaged with the economy.

"Foreign policy?" Mr. Bush asked at a recent news conference. "What a minute. I didn't

come here to talk about foreign policy ..."

Although Mr. Bush's favourite pursuit is dealing with world leaders and world issues, that's all been put on a back burner.

The White House has also dropped its dismissive "polls go up, polls go down" way of responding to public opinion surveys.

When a Washington Post-ABC News poll showed Tuesday that Mr. Bush's approval rating had fallen to its lowest point for ever — 47 per cent — spokesman Martin Fitzwater said, "we take these numbers to heart."

The president's desire not to be portrayed as consumed by foreign policy was driven home dramatically last week when Secretary of State James Baker — and not Mr. Bush — stepped forward to announce a White House-sponsored international conference on the post-Soviet world.

A few days later, Mr. Baker reported on Soviet developments in the White House briefing room.

Mr. Bush started edging away from the conduct of foreign policy on Nov. 5, when it became clear that his handpicked senatorial candidate, Republican Dick Thornburgh, had lost the Pennsylvania race to Democrat Harris Wofford in a campaign that focused on health care.

Mr. Bush postponed a trip to Asia and Australia, saying he needed to stay home to give more attention to the economy.

That trip to the Pacific rim nations is on again for early next

year — but now it's being packaged as a trade mission.

"We've got to open up those markets," he said.

Meanwhile, conservative commentator Patrick Buchanan asserted Tuesday that officials of the Republican Party are actively seeking to frustrate his challenge to the reelection of President Bush and "we're not going to sit still for it."

Mr. Buchanan is seeking the nomination of the Republican Party in the 1992 election, in what is generally seen as a hopeless bid to replace Mr. Bush.

But Mr. Buchanan said he would not run as a third-party candidate, telling a news conference he has always supported the Republican presidential nominee and has no plans to do otherwise this year. A third-party candidate might take votes from Mr. Bush, reducing his chances of reelection against the Democratic candidate.

Mr. Buchanan complained that the Republican National Committee had denied him access to its list of contributors and to its research on Democratic candidates.

He said neither Mr. Bush nor party Chairman Clayton Yeutter was willing to intervene to put his name on the primary ballot in the state of South Dakota on Feb. 25.

"Leaders of the Republican Party are beginning to treat me like David Duke," Mr. Buchanan grouched. Mr. Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, also is challenging Mr. Bush for the party presidential nomination. Mr.

Duke has said he might run as a third party candidate.

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COLUMN

Crooks make off with \$6 million

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — A gang in the north eastern city Recife robbed the local branch of Brazil's biggest bank ever, said. The theft took place after armed men abducted the bank's top security guard as he stepped off a bus, said a policeman in Recife who spoke on condition of anonymity. The crooks forced the man to let them in the bank, where they took several security agents and a blowtorch to open the safe, the policeman said.

Rats cut phone links in Algerian town of Camus's plague

ALGIERS (R) — Voracious rats gnawed through telephone cables in the Algerian city of Oran in inspiration for Albert Camus' La Peste (The Plague), a story of mass death brought by the plague. Technicians found kilometres of cable chewed through by the rats in the town city after phone lines were cut six days, the Algerian News Agency (APS) reported. Last newspapers recently reported huge increases in the rat population, with high-rise apartment occupants stamping on the floor to try to frighten the vermin away.

Gang makes off with pensions, bonuses

ATHENS (AP) — Five men held up a suburban post office and stole 287 million drams (\$1.6 million) intended for pensions and Christmas bonuses, police said. The gang struck the Agallio Post Office shortly before 8 a.m., an officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The money had just arrived at the branch. One of the robbers was dressed as a policeman and carried an automatic weapon. He and three others armed with automatics and handguns, hid up 25 postal workers and about 10 customers stealing bags filled with money, witnesses told reporters. A fifth member stood watch outside. The robbers escaped in a van, shooting and injuring a passing traffic policeman in the police spokesman said. Police later found the vehicle abandoned in the neighbouring suburb of Peristeri.

Emperor to receive Bush at the court, tennis court, that is

TOKYO (AP) — Taking time from the mostly business-oriented, tight schedule of his official visit to Japan early next month, President George Bush will meet Emperor Akihito on the tennis court, a news report said. Bush, who visits Japan from Jan. 7-10 during a four-nation Asian tour, will play tennis with Emperor Akihito at a court in the Akasaka Palace on Jan. 8, the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper reported. An official of the Imperial Household Agency said that if the two leaders do meet on the court, it will be Emperor Akihito's first chance to play tennis with a visiting foreign dignitary since he ascended the chrysanthemum throne in January 1989. Mr. Bush also will have a discussion with Tokyo high school students that is to be televised in the United States, the nation's largest newspaper reported. A Foreign Ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the visit of Mr. Bush's itinerary in Japan are still being worked out.

Man stumbles into his own wake

GUIGINTO, Philippines (AP) — Nador San Diego was surprised to find a wake being held at his home after he returned from visiting a friend. "Who died?" he asked. "You," a startled friend replied. The mixup began Dec. 1 when San Diego, an alderman in this town 50 kilometres north of Manila, left to visit a friend in another province, according to report in a local weekly newspaper, Mabuhay. That same day police found a body lying on a road near the town and immediately identified it as San Diego. They turned the body over to his grieving mother, who then organised the wake and nine-day wake at the home. On the third day of the wake, San Diego returned home to the surprise of the mourners. Police say they still do not know the identity of the body, which was turned over to a local home.

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